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ABSTRACT

The amount of time students spend in classrooms is relatively short--"13% of the student's waking hours in the first 18 years of life" (Walberg, Paschal, and Weinstein, 1985). They are developing intellectually, socially, and emotionally all the time, and parents are their models and teachers most of the time. This report describes and evaluates the second year of the "Parents Sharing Books" (PSB) project, a parent outreach program for Indiana middle and junior high schools. The report notes that the evaluation of the second year of the program focused on the benefits that participants received as determined by surveys and detailed case studies. The sections of the report are: Parent Participation; "Parents Sharing Books" Expansion; Organization and Training for PSB; Evaluating PSB's Second Year; Case Study Interviews; Summary; and Recommendations. Appendixes include reproductions of newspaper articles about PSB; a sample agenda for the first meeting; lists of books; student and parent pre- and post-surveys, a list of parent and student recommendations for books, an informed consent statement; and a list of PSB school sites. (RS)

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PARENTS SHARING BOOKS

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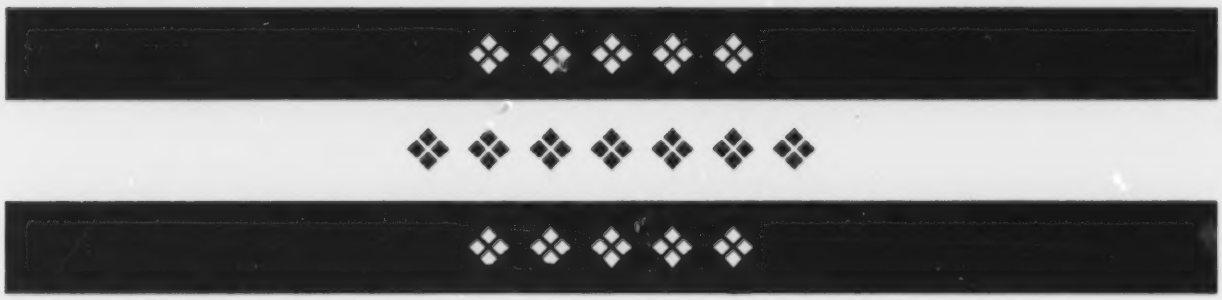


PARENTS SHARING BOOKS:

A PARENT OUTREACH PROGRAM FOR INDIANA MIDDLE/JR. HIGH SCHOOLS

Annual Report: July 31, 1992

PARENT PARTICIPATION

The amount of time students spend in classrooms is relatively short. Walberg, Paschal, and Weinstein (1985) note students are in class for only "13% of the student's waking hours in the first 18 years of life" (p. 79). Obviously, students do not start learning when they enter school in the morning and stop about six hours later when school lets out. They are developing intellectually, socially, and emotionally all the time, twenty-four hours a day, and parents are their models and teachers most of that time.

When parents model literacy activities and participate in activities that promote positive attitudes toward intellectual growth and literacy at home, there is a higher probability that children will be engaged with books (Morrow 1991). Therefore, professional educators must enlist parents in taking an active role in promoting literacy at home.

Most parents are willing to become more supportive, yet they often do not know how to get involved. Some believe that they need support from educators so they can effectively help their children to succeed in school. Certainly, informed parents and teachers know how to complement and support the work of the school and the home. Hence, the *Parents Sharing Books* project has sought to invite and guide educators and parents to cooperate in enhancing children's literacy at home.

A goal of the *Parents Sharing Books* project is to make parents aware that reading with children should continue long after they have begun to read for themselves. School books provide some reading experience, but they are meant to teach children how to read, and cannot be expected also to ensure that the child will derive lifelong pleasure from reading. A mother's—or a father's—reading a great story can entice a reader to enjoy reading and shape habits of reading for pleasure at home.

The *Parents Sharing Books* project encourages parents to read with their children—to read and discuss the same books, to read aloud to their children or listen while children read to them, and share in a variety of ways what has been read. Both parents and children profit from their communication. As parents and children share books, children find how stories take shape, how words are used, and how similiar situations to real life experiences and concerns in books promote discussion between parents and children. Their understanding of the pleasure to be found in books is enhanced.

A goal of the *Parents Sharing Books* project is to make parents aware that reading with children should continue long after they have begun to read for themselves.

Promoting parent involvement through stimulating book sharing strategies takes a busy teacher's and parent's time to change attitudes—attitudes regarding reading as well as attitudes about parent involvement. For many teachers, the "bottom line" of school and family connections is whether or not the activities increase student learning and success in school. Many studies report a connection between parent involvement and student achievement (Henderson, 1987).

There is consensus among educators and research that family involvement is important, that all families can be assisted by schools to become knowledgeable partners in their children's education, and that positive family involvement can help students improve their achievement, attitudes, and other school behaviors. As the *Parents Sharing Books* project moved into its second year of operation, evaluation efforts focused on attitudinal and behavioral changes that occurred in schools and homes as teachers and parents came together in equal partnerships for one common interest—the child.

The *Parents Sharing Books* project has met several goals: 1) to train parent and teacher teams to train other parents and children in sharing books with each other; 2) to help leaders and parents become comfortable discussing books with their teenagers and to keep them enthusiastic about the book-sharing experience; 3) to expand the project's influence locally to associate schools within Indiana and to schools beyond Indiana; and 4) to give leaders and participants an opportunity to celebrate their successes.

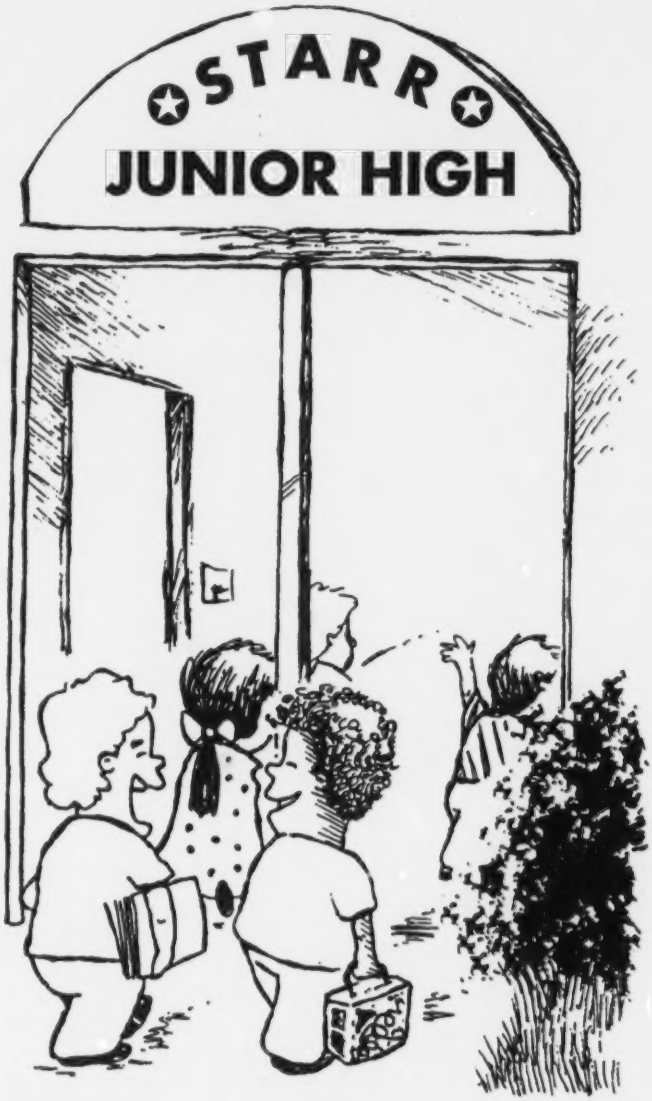
PARENTS SHARING BOOKS EXPANSION

FALL 1991

This middle school parent-involvement program moved on to expand its influence within Indiana and throughout the midwest. Expanding the project's influence involved encouraging trained leader teams to recruit new participants and continue to serve as leaders in the 1991-1992 school year. In addition, new leader teams were recruited to participate in the Fall 1991 *Parents Sharing Books* Training Seminar. This training seminar was held on the Indiana University campus in Bloomington, August 21, at the Indiana Memorial Union.

Leader teams were recruited from the fifty-three targeted areas established by the Lilly Endowment, Inc. and additional invitations were extended to all Indiana middle school principals. The benefits and results of the project were disseminated to a wider audience in the midwest through brochures, conference presentations, newspaper articles (see Appendix A), and educational publications, such as Reading Today and Indiana Reading Quartly (see Appendixes B & C). The *Parents Sharing Books* staff trained forty-three teams at the Fall 1991 training seminar. Thirty-nine of these teams were awarded Lilly Endowment scholarships, and four applicants paid registration fees to receive *Parents Sharing Books* training. Among these applicants were three mentor teams who had received training at a previous PSB seminar. These mentor teams recruited new leader teams in their school or district for the Fall 1991 *Parents Sharing Books* training seminar.

The schools represented at the fall training seminar included Beckman Middle School, Gary; Barker Junior High, Michigan City; Crawford County Jr.-Sr. High School, Marengo; Dunbar-Pulaski Middle School, Gary; Edison Middle School, Gary; Emerson School for the Visual and Performing Arts, Gary; Emma Donnan School #72, Indianapolis; Evans Middle School, Evansville; Gambold Jr. High #108, Indianapolis; H.L. Harshman School #101, Indianapolis; Hibberd Middle School, Richmond; John L. McCulloch Middle School, Marion; Jones Middle School, Marion; Justice Middle School, Marion; Kennedy-King Middle School, Gary; Lakeview Middle School, Warsaw; Lane Middle School, Ft. Wayne; Leo Jr.-Sr. High School, Leo; Madison Jr. High School, Madison; McGary Middle School, Evansville; Meridan Middle School, Indianapolis; Miami Middle School, Ft. Wayne; North Side Middle School, Anderson; North Side Middle School, Elkhart; Northside Middle, Muncie; Northwood Middle School, Ft. Wayne; Oak Hill Middle School, Evansville; Owen Valley Middle School, Spencer; Parkview Jr. High School, New Castle; Parkview Jr. High B-7 Bldg., New Castle; Pierre Moran Middle School, Elkhart; Ravenna Middle School, Ravenna, Michigan; Sarah Scott Jr. High, Terre Haute; Stonybrook Jr. High School, Indianapolis; South Vermillion Middle School, Clinton; South Wayne Jr. High School, Indianapolis; Urbana Middle School, Urbana, Illinois; Washington Middle School, Evansville; West Side Jr. High School, East Chicago; Willowcreek Middle School, Portage; Wilson Middle School, Wyandotte, Michigan; Greenfield Jr. High School, Greenfield; and the Department of Workforce Development, Indianapolis.



ORGANIZATION AND TRAINING FOR PSB.

The Fall 1991 *Parents Sharing Books* training followed a format that was similar to previous PSB training seminars but had been revised in several important ways to give participants more specific direction. Leader teams were trained using the same type of kickoff seminar and incentives as were used for groups trained in year one but with the order and emphasis of activities changed. Information was provided about starting PSB programs in schools, strategies for sharing books effectively, motivating parents and children to read for pleasure at home, ideas for rewarding and recognizing participants who become involved in the PSB program in their school, and promoting efforts for expanding the PSB program to others.

Leaders received a considerably revised manual that provided more direction in conducting local meetings, suggestions from successful PSB leader teams for getting parents and children involved, and more materials for assisting leader teams in getting their PSB program started in their school. All leader teams who received PSB training prior to the fall 1991 seminar were contacted through letters about manual revisions and given an opportunity to request new manuals.

Major changes in the manual were made to accommodate leader requests for more direction and guidance for conducting parent meetings. Feedback from leader teams prompted reorganizing the manual in a format that would be easier for leaders to use and retrieve materials that were specific to the training and information they were delivering to parents. Agendas (see Appendix D) were developed for each parent meeting to assist leaders in their presentation to parents. Leader guides (see Appendix E) were generated for each meeting agenda so that leaders had detailed and specific guides for materials, teacher resources, leader notes, activities, and interactions for use at each meeting. Additional letters, flyers for announcing upcoming meetings, radio news releases, transparencies, book marks, book lists for the different age levels, book annotations, questionnaires, and other resources for helping leaders implement their PSB program were included in the new manual.

Leader teams received a *Parents Sharing Books* bookshelf containing fifty different titles of paperback books that provided a diversity of reading levels and interests (see Appendix F). Mentor teams who attended the fall training seminar received this bookshelf to add to their existing PSB book collection.

Leader teams received book marks for parents. These book marks provided suggestions for motivating children to read and helpful hints for parents during book sharing. The two audio journals that were developed in the first year of PSB were available at this training seminar.

INCENTIVES

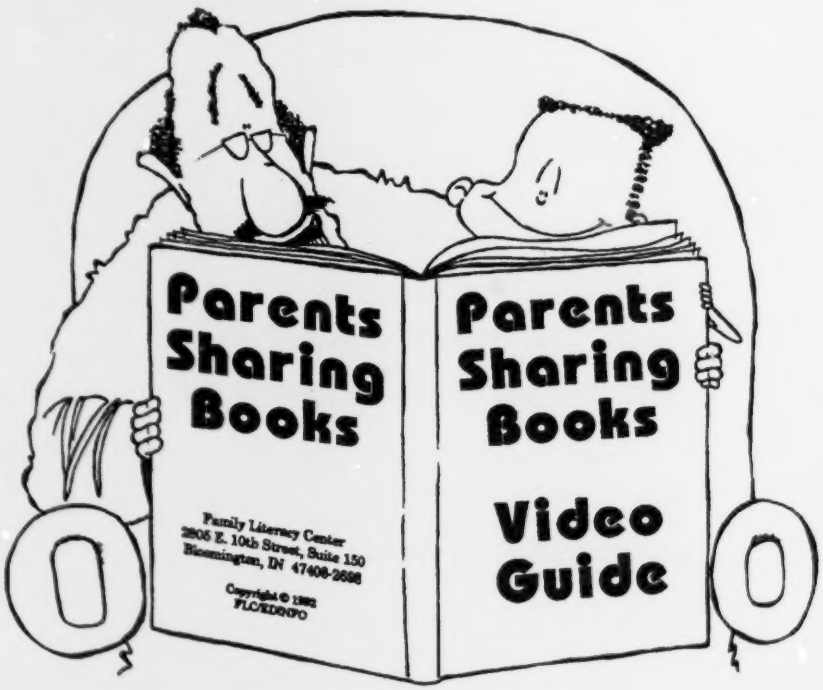
An incentive program was established for leader teams who were involved in the project for a second year, recruited more than ten parents in their school, and provided evaluation on their school's program. New teams were offered similar incentives for getting

parents involved. This incentive plan was seen as a way to motivate leader teams, but also an opportunity for the PSB project to supply more books to active PSB programs. Incentives and criteria included: 1) five books for recruiting ten parents, 2) one book for submitting articles and/or anecdotal evidence to the newsletter, 3) ten books for providing ten parent and ten student evaluations, 4) fifteen books for twenty parent and twenty student evaluations, 5) two books for requesting PSB staff member(s) to attend parent meetings, and 6) ten books for attending a Spring Regional *Parents Sharing Books* Training Seminar. Approximately forty leader teams have earned additional books for their PSB Bookshelf.

The staff at the Family Literacy Center resumed efforts to provide leaders with current and improved materials. Newsletters were sent to all Lilly-targeted schools. This newsletter offered suggestions and support to participating schools, shared events and experiences of leader teams, promoted PSB, and encouraged other schools in targeted areas to become involved with the *Parents Sharing Books* project.

A VIDEOTAPE

In addition to revising materials, publishing newsletters, and developing an incentive plan, a PSB video tape was produced in the spring (copy enclosed). This video tape emphasizes the goals and purposes of the *Parents Sharing Books* program, and acknowledges some of the difficulties parents confront in dealing with children and getting book sharing started at home. It also provides suggestions for establishing reading habits at home and how parents can make book sharing a positive experience, and testimony from parents, teachers, and principals who have been involved in a *Parents Sharing Books* program in their school. The video tape can be used by leader teams and others interested in starting a PSB program. The purpose of this twenty-minute video tape is to increase awareness of the program by informing others what the *Parents Sharing Books* program is about and what participants in the program are saying about it. We believe that hearing from parents and teachers who have actually been involved with the program and listening to them talk about the benefits they received from participating in PSB are types of "motivational testimonies" that can stimulate interest on the part of other parents and teachers.



SPRING 1992

Expansion of the *Parents Sharing Books* project continued during the spring of 1992. PSB hosted four Spring Regional *Parents Sharing Books* Training Workshops. The training at these workshops consisted of small group presentations by the PSB staff. Leader teams participating in these spring meetings received manuals and a PSB bookshelf (see Appendix G). Leader teams were familarized with the overall concept of PSB, as well as with the strategies and techniques emphasized in the manual.

These regional meetings were held in four areas across the state: January 30 in Merrillville, February 1 in Indianapolis, February 6 in Bloomington, and February 8 in Evansville. Teams from forty-one schools attended the spring regional workshops. Schools attending the Spring Regional *Parents Sharing Books* Training Workshops were Attica High School, Attica; Bailly Middle School, Gary; Batchelor Middle School, Bloomington; Central Elementary, Beech Grove; Chauncey Rose Jr. High, Terre Haute; Chrisney Elementary, Chrisney; two teams from Creston Jr. High, Indianapolis; Crispus Attacks Jr. High, Indianapolis; East Side Middle School, Anderson; Fayetteville Elementary, Bedford; Forest Ridge School District, Oak Forest, IL; Glenwood Middle School, Evansville; Goshen Elementary, Goshen, KY; Griffith Elementary, Washington; Hamilton County Unit #10 Schools, Mclainsboro, IL; Heltonville Elementary, Heltonville; Hibberd Middle School, Richmond; two teams from Lake Ridge Middle School, Gary; Lena Dunn Elementary, Washington; Linwood Elementary, Lafayette; Lodge Elementary, Evansville; Longfellow Jr. High School, Indianapolis; Madison Jr. High School, Madison; Morgan Elementary, Palmyra; Navarre Middle School, South Bend; four teams from North Elementary, Washington; North Knox West Elementary, Bruceville; Owen Valley Middle School, Spencer; Parkview Primary, Bedford; Patricksburg Elementary, Patricksburg; four teams from Randolph Southern Elementary, Lynn; two teams from Robey Elementary, Indianapolis; South Vermillion Jr. High School, Clinton; Spohn Elementary/Middle School, Hammond; Study Elementary, Ft. Wayne; three teams from Thompkins Middle School, Evansville; Tri-North Middle School, Bloomington; Union Jr.-Sr. High School, Modoc; Isom Central Elementary, Greenwood; Western Wayne School Corp., Cambridge City; and Willowcreek Middle School, Portage.

EVALUATING PSB'S SECOND YEAR

How effective is the *Parents Sharing Books* project?

The first evaluation of the *Parents Sharing Books* project assessed the schools' success in implementing the project, leaders' and parents' experience in participating in PSB, and their recommendations for improvement of the program. Results of the evaluation of the implementation of the program showed that middle-school parents and leaders were positive about the program, appreciated the staff efforts to inform them of positive approaches for increasing book-sharing at home, and increased leaders' awareness of parents' interest in sharing positive reading experiences with their children.

Evaluation of the second year (1991-92) focused on the benefits that participants received from participating in PSB. Many of the sixty-seven PSB sites completed the pre-survey information, but only twenty-eight of these schools followed-up with post-survey information. Surveys were completed by parents and students. From these surveys, it was possible to learn how parents and students reacted to the program, benefits received from PSB participation, and how the program changed reading habits and book-sharing behaviors at home.

DATA COLLECTED FROM SURVEYS

The Parent Surveys and Student Surveys consisted of a pre- and post-survey. Parents and students were surveyed at the first and last meeting of a semester. The questionnaires for parents and students, respectively, are in Appendixes H, I, J, and K.

The pre-survey asked parents to respond to seven questions that asked for twelve items of information. These questions asked for information about parent and child reading attitudes, habits, and communication, and reasons for attending the *Parents Sharing Books* program. Almost 93% of the parents provided reasons for participating in the PSB program. See Figure 1 for parents' reasons for attending the *Parents Sharing Books* program.

FIGURE 1: PARENTS' REASONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN PSB.

1. What are your reasons for attending the *Parents Sharing Books* training? (N=202)

No comment:	7.4%
One comment:	11.9%
Two comments:	64.4%
Three comments:	16.3%
"Opportunity to share with child":	47.0%
"Good opportunity to encourage reading at home":	37.1%
"Help improve child's reading":	34.6%
"My child asked me to come":	17.3%
"Good way to increase communication":	15.8%
"It's important that we support the school's academic programs":	12.9%
"We really enjoyed the program last year":	2.9%
"Encouraged by my spouse":	2.5%
"Opportunity to share with other parents":	1.5%

Similar information was requested of students participating in the program. The pre-survey asked students to respond to five questions that asked for ten items of information. These questions asked for information about parent and child reading attitudes, habits, and communication, and reasons for participating in the *Parents Sharing Books* program. Almost 90% of the students provided reasons for participating in the PSB program. See Figure 2 for students' reasons for participating in the *Parents Sharing Books* program.

FIGURE 2: STUDENTS' REASONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN PSB.

1. What are your reasons for participating in *Parents Sharing Books*? (N=111)

No comment:	9.9%
One comment:	75.7%
Two comments:	14.4%
"I think it would be fun to spend time with my mom."	58.5%
"I like to read."	31.5%
"Maybe this can help me reading."	13.5%
"This sounds like it might be something fun to do with my parents."	12.6%
"My mom thought we should do this."	10.8%
"I want to like reading better. This may help."	9.9%
"I really like the teacher [leader]."	4.5%

Three of the questions on the pre-survey asked parents about their present reading habits. One question asked if they "ever read to one another at home", another asked if the parent "liked to read," and one asked parents if they "have a set time for readiing at home. Almost 60% of the parents who returned the pre-survey said they read to one another at home, 80% of the parents indicated they liked to read, but less than 20% of these parents actually have a set time for reading at home.

Students responded to a question, "Do you like to read?" About 66% of the students indicated they liked to read. In addition, students were asked to respond to the question, "Why do you read?" They could circle as many choices as appropriate. The choices were: For information, To complete school assignments, and For pleasure. About 45% of the students indicated they read for information, almost 65% of the students said they read to complete school assignments, and only 43% of the students said they read for pleasure.

Although 80% of the parents and 66% of the students indicated they liked reading, just 20% of the parents reported they set aside time to read at home, and only 43% of the students said they read for pleasure. Both parents' and children's comments and reasons for participating in PSB suggest an interest and willingness to establish home reading habits and behaviors that encourage positive experiences for parents and children. Regardless of their present reading habits, most parents and children who responded to this pre-survey saw the *Parents Sharing Books* program as an opportunity to spend time with each other.

In both parent and student pre-surveys, respondents were asked, "Do you presently discuss any of the following with your child or parent?" The discussions could be: News, School Work, Books, Magazines, and Personal Concerns. The responses were: *Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Rarely,* or *Never*. See Table I and Table II for information on parent and student responses.

Notice in Tables I and II the types of discussions that parents and students most frequently had before participating in *Parents Sharing Books*. Both parents and students indicated that most of their parent/child discussions were about school work and personal concerns. These numbers appear higher than what most research reports about parent and child interaction with school work, however, these figures may reflect the type of parents and students that were involved in the program.

TABLE I: PARENTS' RESPONSE TO PARENT/CHILD DISCUSSION HABITS BEFORE PARTICIPATING IN PSB. (N=202)

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely	Never	No Comment
News	38.1	40.1	8.9	10.9	1.5	0.5
School Work	84.2	15.3	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0
Books	5.9	26.2	27.7	36.6	3.6	0.0
Magazines	3.5	17.3	32.7	36.6	9.9	0.0
Personal Concerns	61.9	30.7	6.8	0.1	0.0	1.1

TABLE II: STUDENTS' RESPONSE TO PARENT/CHILD DISCUSSION HABITS BEFORE PARTICIPATING IN PSB. (N=111)

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely	Never	No Comment
News	36.6	28.7	7.4	18.4	8.7	0.0
School Work	75.5	16.2	2.9	5.9	1.5	0.0
Books	14.0	23.5	27.2	29.4	5.9	0.0
Magazines	8.1	8.8	30.1	34.6	18.4	0.0
Personal Concerns	42.6	31.7	8.1	8.1	4.4	5.1

PRE/POST CHANGES

PARENT-STUDENT PROFILE.

Only 26% (98 out of a possible 377) of the parents who participated in PSB during the second year completed a pre- and post-survey. A similar reply was reported for students. Only 22% of the students (82 out of a possible 377) participating in the *Parents Sharing Books* project during the second year returned pre- and post-surveys.

The parent post-survey consisted of eight questions that asked for fourteen items of information. These questions asked for information about parent and child reading habits, attitudes, and interaction after participating in PSB, and the benefits of participating in the program. Parents were asked to write additional comments about PSB and recommendations for improving the program. See Figure 3 for parents' comments about the benefits of participating in PSB and some of their recommendations.

FIGURE 3: PARENT RESPONSE AFTER PARTICIPATING IN PSB.

8. Do you feel you and your child benefited from participating in the *Parents Sharing Books* project? (N=98)

Yes:	91.8%
No:	5.1%
Not sure:	3.1%
No comment	13.9%
Positive comments:	69.8%

"Continue with program."
"Great program/very encouraging."
"Helped my [parent] reading skills."
"We're turning off TV to read!"
"Expanded our reading interests."
"We have other family members involved."
"More aware of my child's reading interests."
"Realize important of reading with child of any age level."
"This was quality time we spent together."
"This made us read—helped to make a habit."

> "This was quality time we spent together."

"I like how this program and the Book Shop worked together."

"This helped us with reading assignments— we got book reports done on time and we worked together on it."

Negative comments 16.3%

"We already read together."

"We didn't give this [PSB] a chance."

"Not enough time."

"This created pressure to read."

"This program should start in the elementary—it's too late now."

"The parents in our group already are very involved with their children. How can we get those other parents involved?"

No recommendations: 70.4%

Recommendations: 29.6%

"Put meetings on school calendar."

"Continue program for the school year."

"I think it would be better to start this program at the beginning of the school year."

"If children come to meetings, have activities so they can participate with us."

"Have parents share at each meeting the books they read—this motivates me and possibly others to read it."

"It would be fun to start a "parents" book club—read books and share."

"I think our church youth leader would be interested in this [program]."

"Have students be more involved in the meetings."

"Parents can start a "phone chain" to make sure parents are notified."

"Each parent can bring a new parent to the next meeting."

"Need questions to go with the books. This would help discussions."

"Book annotations would be helpful for selecting books."

"Advertise this program to incoming 7th graders/parents at orientation."

"I'd love for this [program] to be in our grade school."

Comparable information was requested of students who had participated in the program. The student post-survey consisted of eight questions that asked for eighteen items of information. These questions asked for information about parent and child reading attitudes, habits, and interaction after participating in PSB, and the benefits students felt they received from participating in the program. Students were asked to write additional comments about their experience in PSB and make recommendations for improving the program. See Figure 4 for students' reactions to the *Parents Sharing Books* program.

I'd love for this [program] to be in our grade school.

FIGURE 4: STUDENT RESPONSES AFTER PARTICIPATING IN PSB.

8. Do you feel you and your child benefited from participating in the *Parents Sharing Books* project? (N=82)

Yes:	86.6%
No:	13.4%
No comment	19.4%
Positive comments:	69.5%

"My mom listens to me now."
"I like how we spend time together now."
"I didn't think I'd like this [PSB], but it was fun."
"It helped me read a little better."
"My mom and I talk more and we don't argue as much."
"I've started to read a little more."
"I want to continue doing this with my mom."
"I think we understand each other a little better than we used to."
"My mom is starting to read more. She really likes the books I read."
"This helped me do book reports."

Negative comments:	11.1%

"Helped a little, but not that much."
"We don't have time to do this."
"We already do this at home."
"My mom couldn't come, so my teacher did it with me."

No recommendations:	90.2%
Recommendations:	9.8%

"Let us students come to the meetings."
"Keep these meetings short."
"Talk about books I would like to read."
"Make sure there is easy books and short books to read."

In addition, students were asked to respond in the post-survey to the question, "Do you think the PSB program has done any of the following?" The choices were: 1) improved communication with my parents; 2) increased my desire to read alone; 3) increased my desire to read and talk with my parents; 4) increased my appreciation of reading; and 5) not affected me at all. Students could check all that applied. Almost 60% of the students indicated PSB improved communication with their parents, and approximately 48% said that it increased their desire to read alone. Fifty-six percent of the students reported that it increased their desire to read and talk with their parents, and nearly 46% responded that the program increased their appreciation of reading. Only 16% of the students felt it had not affected them at all.

Although the main purpose of *Parents Sharing Books* is to increase family literacy, that is, to increase the interaction between parents and middle school children over books they read together, a

secondary purpose is to encourage improved communication between parents and children as they share books and work together during a crucial period in their relationship. A large number of parents and children said they benefited from participating in the *Parents Sharing Books* program, and many of their comments indicated they valued the time they spent together. Over half of the students felt the program had improved communication with their parents, and had increased their desire to read and talk with their parents.

Parents were asked to respond in their post-surveys to the same question they answered in the pre-survey, "Do you presently discuss any of these with your child?" Discussions with children were: News, School Work, Books, Magazines, and Personal Concerns. Possible parent responses were: *Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Rarely,* or *Never.* See Table III for parent post-survey information about parent responses to discussion habits after participating in PSB.

TABLE III: PARENTS' POST-SURVEY INFORMATION ABOUT PARENT/CHILD DISCUSSION HABITS AFTER PARTICIPATING IN PSB. (N=98)

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely	Never	No Comment
News	46.9	40.8	5.1	6.1	1.1	0.0
School Work	89.8	9.2	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Books	29.3	61.2	3.1	3.8	2.0	0.0
Magazines	4.1	31.6	40.8	19.4	4.1	0.0
Personal Concerns	77.6	17.3	1.0	0.0	0.0	4.1

About one half of the parents felt they discussed news with their children *daily* (47%). Not much change occurred for *weekly* (41%) discussions of news; however, a significant reverse appeared in *monthly* (5%), *rarely* (6%), and *never* (1%) responses.

Almost 90% of the parents indicated they discussed school work with their children *daily* after participating in PSB. A notable shift from *daily* discussion of school work to *weekly* (9%), *monthly* (0%), *rarely* (1%), and *never* (0%) appeared in the responses of parents. This figure remains high for this particular group. Comments from leaders and parents suggest that PSB staff and leader teams must generate strategies to involve the parent who is reluctant to become involved with their child's academic life.

Less than one third of the parents said they discussed books with their children *daily* (29%); however, almost twice as many parents felt they discussed books with their children *weekly* (61%) after participating in PSB. Obvious change in parent responses appeared in book discussions for *monthly* (3%), *rarely* (4%), and *never* (2%).

Parents were considerably less enthusiastic about discussing magazines with their children *daily* (4%), but over 32% of the parents said they were discussing magazines *weekly* with their children. Nearly 40% of the parents felt they discussed magazines with their children *monthly*, only 19% of the parents *rarely* discussed magazines, and less than 5% of the parents *never* discussed magazines with their children

after participating in PSB. Factors such as the cost and availability of magazines, may have influenced the amount of time parents spent sharing magazines with their children.

Over 75% of the parents said they discussed personal concerns with their children *daily*, and an additional 17% of the parents felt they discussed personal concerns with their children *weekly*. Only 1% of the parents reported discussing personal concerns with their children *monthly*, and none of the parents felt they *rarely* or *never* discussed personal concerns. About 4% of the parents did not comment about discussing personal concerns with their children.

Students were asked to respond in their post-surveys to the same question they answered in the pre-survey, "Do you presently discuss any of these with your parents?" Discussions with parents were: News, School Work, Books, Magazines, and Personal Concerns. Student choices were: *Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Rarely,* or *Never*. See Table IV for student post-survey information about student responses to discussion habits after participating in PSB.

TABLE IV: STUDENTS' POST-SURVEY INFORMATION ABOUT PARENT/CHILD DISCUSSION HABITS AFTER PARTICIPATING IN PSB. (N=82)

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely	Never	No Comment
News	34.1	47.6	4.9	11.0	2.4	0.0
School Work	85.4	13.4	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0
Books	32.9	47.6	6.1	13.4	0.0	0.0
Magazines	9.8	20.7	19.5	25.6	12.7	0.0
Personal Concerns	64.6	20.7	3.7	11.0	0.0	0.0

More than one third of the students felt they discussed the news with their parents *daily* (34%); however, almost one half of the students said they discussed news with their parents *weekly* (48%). An apparent movement appeared in *monthly* (5%), *rarely* (11%), and *never* (2%) responses between the pre- and post-surveys.

Most students (85%) reported they discussed school work with their parents *daily* after participating in PSB. A notable shift from discussing school work daily to *weekly* (13%), *monthly* (0%), *rarely* (1%), and *never* (0%) appeared in the responses of students.

A third of the students said they discussed books with their parents *daily* (33%); however, almost one half of the students felt they discussed books with their parents *weekly* (48%) after taking part in PSB. Obvious changes occurred in student responses from weekly book discussions to *monthly* (6%), *rarely* (13%), and *never* (0%) during students' participation in *Parents Sharing Books*.

Students were notably less enthusiastic about discussing magazines *daily* (10%) with their parents. Almost 21% of the students said they discussed magazines *weekly* with their parents, and similar outcomes for magazine discussions were reported for *monthly* (20%) and *rarely* (26%) responses. More than 10% of the students still indicated

that they *never* shared magazines with their parents after participating in PSB.

Nearly 65% of the students said they discussed personal concerns with their parents *daily,* and an additional 21% of the students felt they discussed personal concerns with their parents *weekly.* Only 4% of the students reported they discussed personal concerns with their parents *monthly,* but 11% of the students reported *rarely* discussing personal concerns after participating in *Parents Sharing Books.* None of the students reported *never* sharing personal concerns with their parents after taking part in PSB.

Significant changes in the discussion habits of parents and children occurred in the pre- and post-survey responses of parents. See Table V for parent pre- and post-survey comparisons of parent/children discussion habits.

TABLE V: PARENTS' PRE- AND POST-SURVEY COMPARISONS OF PARENT/CHILD DISCUSSION HABITS.

	Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Rarely		Never	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
News	38.1	46.9	40.1	40.8	8.9	5.1	10.9	6.1	1.5	1.1
School Work	84.2	89.8	15.3	9.2	0.0	0.0	0.5	1.0	0.0	0.0
Books	5.9	29.6	26.2	61.2	27.7	3.1	36.6	3.8	3.6	2.0
Magazines	3.5	4.1	17.3	31.6	32.7	40.8	36.6	19.4	9.9	4.1
Personal Concerns	61.9	77.6	30.7	17.3	6.8	1.0	0.1	0.0	0.5	0.0

Parents' habits of discussing news *daily* with their children increased by approximately nine percentage points while taking part in the *Parents Sharing Books* program. Their *weekly* discussion of news did not change significantly during this time, but one can see a major shift from pre- to post-survey responses for *monthly, rarely,* and *never* during this period.

An increase in *daily* discussion of school work with children was reported by parents during their participation in PSB. There was some shift in numbers from pre- to post-survey, but no significant changes were noted in parents' discussion of school work during this time. It remained high for this group.

Major increases were noted in parents' *daily* and *weekly* discussions of books with their children while participating in PSB. Parents increased their *daily* book sharing with their children by six-fold, and by three-fold for *weekly* book discussions while taking part in PSB. There was a definite shift in numbers for *monthly, rarely,* and *never* responses during this time.

Although there was some movement in responses for parents discussing magazines with their children between pre- and post-survey, the only one of any significance occurred in parents' *weekly, rarely,* and *never* responses for discussing magazines with their children. *Weekly* discussions with magazines increased almost two-fold for parents,

whereas *rarely* and *never* responses decreased by similar amounts for parents during this time.

A comparison of parents' pre- and post-survey information demonstrated an increase in discussing personal concerns with children during this time. Parents' increase in daily discussion of personal concerns caused an apparent decrease in percentage points for *weekly, monthly, rarely,* and *never* responses during parents' participation in *Parents Sharing Books*.

Significant changes occurred in the discussion habits of students during their participation in PSB. See Table VI for students' pre- and post-survey comparisons of parent and child discussion habits while taking part in the *Parents Sharing Books* program.

TABLE VI: STUDENTS' PRE- AND POST-SURVEY COMPARISONS OF PARENT/CHILD DISCUSSION HABITS.

	Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Rarely		Never	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
News	36.8	34.1	28.7	47.6	7.4	4.9	18.4	11.0	8.7	2.4
School Work	73.5	85.4	16.2	13.4	2.9	0.0	5.9	1.2	1.5	0.0
Books	14.0	32.9	23.5	47.6	27.2	6.1	29.4	13.4	5.9	0.0
Magazines	8.1	9.8	8.8	20.7	30.8	19.5	34.6	26.6	18.4	12.2
Personal Concerns	42.6	64.6	31.7	20.7	8.1	3.7	8.1	11.0	4.4	0.0

Insignificant decreases in student *daily* practices of discussing news with their parents occurred over this time; however, a some shift occurred in the *weekly, monthly, rarely,* and *never* responses for students. Students responses for *weekly* discusssions about news increased by approximately nine percentage points.

An increase of almost twelve percentage points in *daily* discussion of school work with parents was reported by students during their participation in PSB. This *daily* interaction over school work remained high for this group, and showed major shifts from *daily* interaction to significant falls in *weekly, monthly, rarely,* and *never* responses for students during this time.

Major increases were noted in students' *daily* and *weekly* discussions of books with their parents while participating in PSB. Students increased their *daily* and *weekly* book sharing with their parents over two-fold during this time. There was also a positive shift in numbers for *monthly, rarely,* and *never* responses during this time. Before participating in *Parents Sharing Books*, four times as many students responded to *monthly* book sharing with their parents, twice as many students responded to *rarely,* and nearly six times as many students responded that book sharing was *never* performed with their parents.

Although there was some movement in responses from students regarding discussing magazines with their parents between pre- and post-survey, most activity occurred in students' *weekly* responses for discussing magazines with their parents.

A comparison of students' pre- and post-survey information showed an increase in discussing personal concerns with parents during this time. Students' increase in *daily* discussion of personal concerns caused an apparent decrease in percentage points for *weekly, monthly,* and *never* responses during students' participation in *Parents Sharing Books*. However, an increase was shown in student responses to *rarely* discussing personal concerns with their parents during this time.

A few of the survey questions asked parents and children to respond to "favorite" and "least favorite" books on the PSB bookshelf. These questions were not directed to provide evaluation information to be analyzed, but the primary purpose of such questions was to supply PSB staff with additional suggestions and recommendations for future bookshelf selections (see Appendix L).

After participating in the PSB program, an increased number of parents had indicated they had made changes or were trying to make an attempt to change reading attitudes and behaviors at home. Over 80% of the parents reported they were reading to one another at home, and almost 65% of the parents said they had a set time for reading at home, while 21% of the parents reported they were "trying" to establish a set time for reading at home.

From other studies, we know that when teachers encourage parents and children to interact with one another about schoolwork, books, and other types of reading and school-related activities and ideas, the children do better in school. One parent revealed that parents are very interested in their children's programs and progress, and rely on teachers to help them. This mother's comment was:

> *I was very concerned about my son's comprehension. He can read, but he has a difficult time recalling what he has read and his grades showed this. I was concerned and sent several letters to his teacher, but got no response. I called the school and the secretary told me about this [PSB] program. We decided to try it and it has helped. It's made me see how I can help him with his problem and his grades have improved. It's too bad more parents don't take advantage of programs like this.*

We also know that pre-adolescents and adolescents often find themselves in a state of conflict, struggling to be independent yet embracing the comforts and security of family. Reading young adult books can help parents and middle school children ease the strained relationships that often arise during this time. Sharing books can be a vehicle for conversations, idea exchange, and mutual understanding that may not be available in other ways. At a time when peer pressure is a powerful force, an opportunity for parents to interact positively with their children is important. Many parents (about 92%) indicated that reading and sharing books was beneficial in opening the door to meaningful dialogue and spending quality time together. One parent wrote:

Major increases were noted in students' *daily* and *weekly* discussions of books with their parents while participating in PSB.

I didn't realize the enjoyment my daughter and I had missed before this program. We laughed and cried at the books we read. We shared our thoughts and feelings on lots of "touchy" issues. I'm very grateful for this program. We will continue to read together!

Another parent wrote:

I realized I didn't listen enough. This is something we can do and nct quarrel about.

Other parents who did not find the program as rewarding provided insight into other areas the project must address. One mother wrote:

My child and I honestly chose a book which turned out not to be of interest. With the initial choice made poorly, we were reluctant to choose another book. I feel we did not give the program an honest try. I would like to participate again and encourage others to do the same.

Adults who enjoy reading and read a lot often have techniques for selecting books. Parents must realize that adolescents may not have developed book-selection skills; therefore, they may not be able to choose appropriate books to meet their expectations and interests. Teenagers who are unable to find enjoyable books sometimes quit reading. Parents and children must be aware that it is okay to quit a book that is not interesting: After all, it is the enjoyment of a good story that motivates the reader to read more. When adolescents are unable to select books on their own, they will not develop into mature readers. Teachers could encourage more parents to participate in the program by providing individual assistance with book selection and helping parents and students become aware of their reading interests.

Some parents (5%) indicated that the program did not provide benefits, because they were already reading with their child, they felt the age level the program targeted was inappropriate, or they were unable to find time. Parents commented:

1) I feel this is a good program, but it didn't reach the parents that need it. We already read and students who are not already avid readers could be motivated through a program such as this if those parents would just get involved.
2) It was good to share, but we prefer reading materials that are not as lengthy and can be read in segments with no time period involved. This took lots of time.
3) I feel that the younger children would benefit more from this program. The 3rd and 4th grades would be an ideal age to target.
4) Not this year, because there just wasn't enough time due to family matters. However, last year I felt we benefited from the program.

Overall, the concept of parents and children sharing books to increase communication was well received by parents and their children. The FLC staff will want to consider some leader and parent comments about the type of parents involved in this program. A few leaders and parents have indicated that it is difficult to get those parents involved whose children would benefit most from PSB—those who are not involved with their child's academic life. Some leaders and parents indicated that many of the parents who are involved in *Parents Sharing Books* already read with their children and continue to be involved with their children as they progress through school.

CASE STUDY INTERVIEWS

In addition to collecting data from the surveys, perhaps the most valuable portion of the evaluation came from the interviews with PSB participants that were used for preparing case study reports. The purpose of this case study approach to evaluation was: 1) to gain insight into the habits, attitudes, and behaviors related to book sharing of parents and middle school children who have participated in the *Parents Sharing Books* training; 2) to gain insight into the experiences of parents and middle school children who have been involved in successful *Parents Sharing Books* programs; and 3) to gain insight from leader teams who have implemented successful and/or unsuccessful *Parents Sharing Books* programs.

Criteria for site selection was based on school demographics (urban, suburban, and rural); success of school in implementing a PSB program; and school distance, for traveling convenience. Letters were sent to schools explaining the purpose of the case study evaluation and requesting their participation in telling the story of PSB. These school sites represented urban, suburban, and rural communities; leader teams who were implementing PSB in unique ways; leader teams who were experiencing difficulty in implementing PSB in their school; and parents and children who possessed different attitudes about reading and who held distinct reasons for participating in PSB. Leader teams who were willing to participate in this evaluation were provided in advance consent forms and interview protocols.

These thirteen schools agreed to meet with a PSB staff person and share with them their experiences of being involved in the project: Batchelor Middle School, Bloomington; Edinburgh Community High School, Edinburgh; Wilson Middle School, Muncie; McCulloch Middle School, Marion; Tolleston Middle School, Gary; Emerson Middle School, Gary; Knox Community Junior High School, Knox; Creston Junior High School, Indianapolis; Thompkins Middle School, Evansville; Madison Junior High School, Madison; Jones Middle School, Marion; Hibberd School, Richmond; and Owen Valley Middle School, Spencer.

The methods used to collect data for this study were explained in the consent form (see Appendix M) so that each participant was aware that from these data sources, a case study report would be written about their experience with the *Parents Sharing Books* program. Initial contact was made to acquaint evaluators and subjects to the purpose of the interviews. Interviews, along with the use of audio tapes, were conducted with the parents, students, and/or leader teams. Interviews took approximately sixty minutes for each respondent and these interviews took place in the school library or other convenient place within the school. Respondents were encouraged to ask questions at any time during the interview about the nature of the evaluation and methods used. Staff phone numbers were provided so that respondents could ask questions about concerns they might have after interviewing was completed.

The following were the terms of participating in the case study: 1) real names were used during data collection. Any place names were given pseudonyms in the written case report; 2) if respondents gave their permission to be recorded, audio tapes may be used in publications and instructional materials for the *Parents Sharing Books* project; 3) respondents received a copy of the case report before the final draft was written and negotiated changes with the evaluator; and 4) the information collected through interviews is the property of the Family Literacy Center. If a respondent was interested in obtaining a copy of their taped interview, a tape was made available at the respondents' request.

Respondents were aware that their participation in this evaluation study was voluntary. They had the right to withdraw at any time from the study, for any reason and without any prejudice. If they withdrew from the study prior to its completion, their data would be returned to them upon request or destroyed. The information in the study records were kept confidential. Data was stored at the Family Literacy Center, Indiana University, and will be made available only to persons participating in the study.

For participating in this study, respondents received trade books for their enjoyment at home, or they had the option of contributing these books to their school's PSB Bookshelf. If participants withdrew from the study prior to its completion, this benefit was no longer available to them.

It must be noted the evaluator conducting this case study evaluation and authoring this report of PSB has a vested interest in the *Parents Sharing Books* project. As a stakeholder, this person was a team member from the inception of this project, has helped to develop program materials-and leader training, and now is operating as an inside evaluator. The evaluator portrayed the different values and needs of all individuals and groups served by the project, weighing and balancing this plurality of judgements and criteria in a largely intuitive fashion. Thus, what is judged "successful" depends heavily on the values and perspectives of whichever groups or individuals are judging.

For this report, it was not feasible to include all of the case studies that were conducted because of length, but the stories that follow provide readers of this report a glimpse of some of those leaders, parents, and students, and how they have been affected by the *Parents Sharing Books* program in their school. Each story has a brief introduction, followed by the participant's story, and concludes with comments by the evaluator.

STORY #1

INTRODUCTION

Marie and her mother agreed to met with our PSB staff when most families are thinking about sitting down to dinner. Mrs. Johnson had just come from her job as a computer customer service representative. Mrs. Johnson had been working part-time outside the home, but had started working full-time just prior to the time when she agreed to meet with the PSB staff. Her job requires long hours and occasional trips away from home.

Her daughter, Marie, is a fifth grade student at McCullough Middle School in Marion, Indiana. Marie is a confident, articulate, and witty young lady who does not find it difficult to express what is on her mind, even when she is surrounded by adults! Marie laughs when her mother describes her as "anything but shy." Laughter comes just as easily from Mrs. Johnson when Marie tells us that they "are a very busy family." Marie goes on to say, "in fact, it can get pretty hectic around our house! My mom may be working late and she calls to tell us to start dinner. My sister and I get the popcorn popper out and fix dinner for all of us!"

This is Marie's and Mrs. Johnson's story about how the *Parents Sharing Books* program at McCullough Middle School came to play an important role in enhancing their mother and daughter relationship.

MARIE AND HER MOTHER'S STORY

MARIE: Mrs. Hoffman came to our class to explain the program. She said that she wanted students to come to the meetings who would be dedicated. Mrs. Hoffman told us about the special books that just the people who joined *Parents Sharing Books* could use. She talked about sharing these books with your parents and how sometimes books can help us talk about our problems or worries. Characters in books might be going through what we are going through in our life. Mrs. Hoffman explained that reading together can just be a way to spend quality time with your parents.

I decided to try it, because I never read with my mom anymore. She is busy and we never spend time together.

I decided to try it, because I never read with my mom anymore. She is busy and we never spend time together. We didn't spend much quality time together. I also knew this other person in my class who was in *Parents Sharing Books*. She and her mom have a pretty good relationship. My mom is busy and she didn't spend much time with me or my sister so I thought this might be good for us.

I really wanted to do this program and when I came home to tell my mom about it, she said somebody had talked to her about it, too. Mom said that if I would like to be in it, then we would be in it and really work at doing it. We both really wanted to do it.

MOTHER: Marie has really initiated this whole thing. She was real adamant that we do this. She came home with the announcement and made sure that I knew about it and when the first meeting would be

held. She said, "This is what I've been talking about. Here's when they are going to meet. Now we're going to be there, right?" Marie was real persistent!

Right now, I am at two schools with the grade levels the girls are in. When teacher and parent groups approach me about being on councils, committees, or helping with activities at school, I try to contribute. I have not really gotten involved in the Parents' Advisory Council here [McCullough Middle School] as I did in the elementary school, but it's not because someone has not approached me. I don't know that I would have the commitment for the program [PSB] if a teacher had contacted me. I probably would have come to a meeting, but may not have stuck with it like Marie and I have with the *Parents Sharing Books* program.

We are busy and it's hard to be a good participant when you are involved in everything. I try to tell the girls that we can pick and choose the activities that we really want. This *Parents Sharing Books* program was one thing that I felt Marie thought was really important for us to do.

It has given me an opportunity to get involved with Marie in a very positive way. Our efforts in doing *Parents Sharing Books* affect us directly. Marie and I benefit from it—it's just for us. It contributes to our relationship which is different than most parent councils, school meetings, or advisory committees.

My commitment stems from the fact that this was something that was important to Marie. It was the kind of thing that we both wanted to do and we both wanted to commit to it. That kind of encouragement helped me to really make the effort to get here [to the meetings] and to share books with Marie. Had Marie not been so insistent that we do this, I'm not sure I would have been so committed to making it work.

I have always been involved or been a part of my children's development and education. I enjoyed reading to them when they were young and [I feel] it's up to the parent to continue that practice. I have always read, always loved to read, always had books in the home, and the children have always had a book in their hands. The girls see my husband and I read at home.

We use the library constantly. Marie used to laugh at me [because] when she would have friends over, we would go to the library. She said I would say to her friends, "And you don't have a library card. Well, we'll stop by and get you a card. All you do is have your mom sign it!" She kept saying, "Are you trying to make sure everybody in my class has a library card?" Well, yes, I guess I did! I think this is important!

MARIE: My mom has to coax my sister to read, but sometimes I can't put a book down that I am reading when it's time to go to bed. I can't remember the title of the book I was reading, but I had read so far into the book that I just had to finish it. I read it in one night. I stayed up real late to finish it. My mom and dad both came in and told me to go to bed. Mom came in for the third time to turn my light off, so I

shoved my blanket under the door so they couldn't see the light. I got my little flashlight out and read the rest of the book! I finished that book!

We have a lot of books at home—too many to count! We have a bookshelf downstairs and we have a big bookcase that my dad made for all of our books. I have one in my room, too.

We go to the library all the time. If I ask my mom a question that she doesn't know much about, she always says, "Well, there are probably books at the library that can help us!" When I started showing signs of adolescence, my mom immediately went to the library and got a couple of books. I asked her a lot of questions. A couple of people in my class say their parents don't answer their questions. But my mom is not like that. She helps me a lot. She will go to the library and she will check books out.

My language arts teacher is really into reading, too. She has posters that are about reading all over the walls. At one point, she had posters all over the wall and you could hardly see the wall. She has lots of bookshelves in her room and all of them are filled with books. She encourages us to read by having required reading and we get points, and then get prizes if we get so many points. We talk with others in the class about the books we are reading and that's fun.

The reading teacher said that if you read fifty pages in a book and still do not enjoy the book, then that is not the right book for you. It may be the right book for somebody else, but maybe it's not for you. We have read *Anne of Green Gables; Anne of Avonlea; Welcome Home, Jellybean;* and *Hello God, It's Me Margaret.* I brought home *Little Women,* but I quit that one!

I enjoy reading aloud with my mom now. When I don't understand parts in the book, she is right there to help me understand it better. She gives me a lot of answers, she listens to my opinion, and I listen to her opinion. Sometimes we don't agree, but at least we hear both sides now.

MOTHER: I think this [PSB] is a real positive way of continuing to share books with your children as they grow older. Now, had Marie come home and wanted to do a program called "parents sharing physics or something like that," I don't think I would have responded quite so positively! It was real easy to respond to Marie's request, because she was so enthusiastic, she loves to read, and so do I.

Her sister will come to the middle school next year and I think about how she would have reacted to this invitation to participate in *Parents Sharing Books.* She doesn't enjoy reading like Marie and we actually have to work at getting her to read. Marie's sister probably would not have come home and told me about this program. I will have to be the one to initiate it next year for her, but at least I know the program is here for us.

To make it work, you really have to say, "Okay, this is when we are going to do this." Otherwise, it will never happen. Obviously, there are things that come up and we may not have time every evening to

read together. Setting a definite time aside to read together is the best way. We come together in the evening with the two girls. I try to spend separate time with each of them. It is a nice way to wind up the day and I think it is a good time for Marie and I to spend time together—just the two of us to talk about things that are going on with us.

MARIE: Before we started this, my mom and I kept away from each other a lot. If I had questions about something, I might ask my mom, but I would ask my friends, too. They would say something entirely different from what my mom said. This sometimes caused trouble for my mom and me. I feel more comfortable coming to my mom now [after being in PSB]. I might ask my friends about things, but my mom's opinion is important now.

MOTHER: Because of Marie's younger sister's needing more time, I spent less time reading with Marie and probably less time with Marie in general. Her sister's needs demanded more of my attention and I tended to give her more of my time out of necessity. We think that they [Marie and children like her] do not need that kind of support, because they are good readers, enjoy reading, and do okay in school. I realize that Marie needs my attention just as much as her sister, only in a different way. *Parents Sharing Books* has helped us to make time just for the two of us. This [PSB] is just something for US.

We have used this time to really talk about things. There may be situations in the book that we are not experiencing, but we still talk about them. I share my beliefs and Marie knows where I stand on these issues. We can talk about these things in a calm manner and I can listen to her talk without the anger or fighting. We are involved in what we are talking about, but it's not an emotional discussion.

Sharing books together made me realize she is [Marie] growing up! *Parents Sharing Books* has given me the opportunity to see her growing. I see her thinking for herself. I see her growing into this independent young lady. And you know, it's exciting!

MARIE: Some of the books we read together help us talk about things that I am going through, but also help us talk about things that normally we would disagree on or argue about. There was this one book and the girl in it had a real attitude problem and she was constantly fighting with her mother. She needed "an adjustment," as we would say in our house. I asked my mom why she would act that way. Mom didn't know why and the conversation led to me asking Mom if I am like that girl in the book. And my mom said, "Well, yes, a little. And I said, "Well, I don't agree with you." This got us to talking about why each of us felt the way we did. It helped to understand why my mom thinks the way she does and I think she understands a little better why I sometimes act and do the things I do.

Before we did *Parents Sharing Books*, we probably would have disagreed and that would have been the end of it. She would have said, "It's like this and if you don't agree with me that's tough." I felt like it was always her terms. We still disagree, but now we share our opinions and try to understand how the other person feels.

I share my beliefs and Marie knows where I stand on these issues. We can talk about these things in a calm manner and I can listen to her talk without the anger or fighting.

MOTHER: We have used events in the books we read together to talk about personal situations. Not only has it helped me to understand Marie's feelings and attitudes, but it has helped me to see myself through other characters in the book. I am asking myself, "Do I do things or say things that make you feel like I'm this green monster over here trying to control your life?"

Through our sharing, I have tried to help Marie see the "flip-side." Sometimes mothers and fathers have to take a position on something that is sometimes unpleasant—a parent role taking responsibility for their children and yet it may be a position that seems mean in the eyes of your children. During our conversations, I have tried to explain that some of our decisions may make her [Marie] unhappy, but the choices we have made are because we have her best interest at heart and we love her.

Sharing books has helped me to see both sides and have an opportunity to talk about why we do the things we do. It's different now. We are talking about these same concerns and problems that are in a book, rather than actually having the real disagreement in our own relationship.

"Sharing books has helped me to see both sides and have an opportunity to talk about why we do the things we do."

There have been times when just having the book and reading what is going on in the book has made me more courageous in bringing up subjects. Something that would sound so awkward to just confront Marie about, is so easy to do when we run across a delicate subject in a book. Now I feel comfortable stopping while [we're] reading a book together and saying, "Do you think we could talk about this?", or "Do you really know what that means?"

I think part of it goes back to having the structured time of reading and talking within boundaries, and yet free to say, "Well, this is how I feel" or "This is what I would do." Hopefully, because we have taken the time now within the boundaries we set aside for reading, we can find it easier to come to one another during other times. It has opened a door that no parent wants to close.

MARIE: We are going to keep doing this. I plan to do it next year, too. I am going to France this summer and I told Mom that I want to buy two copies of the books I am going to take with me. She can keep copies for her and I will take the other copies with me. At the same time every night, we will read and that way we will both know that we are still sharing even when I am away.

COMMENTARY

It is obvious that Mr. and Mrs. Johnson have provided a strong model for motivating Marie to become a good reader. They have surrounded her with reading materials, nurtured her interests and sought out books to support them. The Johnsons clearly value reading in their home. Marie, an excellent student, is also an avid reader, who knows how to choose books which fit her own interests, and feels comfortable rejecting those which do not. One would be inclined to ask why, then, do a parent and child who have established strong habits of reading for pleasure at home participate in *Parents Sharing Books*.

Marie implied that their involvement in the *Parents Sharing Books* program at her school developed because both she and her mother felt a need to communicate better with each other and had a desire to spend time together. In Marie's view, their family life was busy and she wanted to spend quality time with her mother. Marie's first-hand knowledge suggested that she was entering a difficult period in her life, and that she was doing so just when everyone in the family was adjusting to her mother's career changes. This sometimes made it difficult for Marie and her mother to spend time together, and they were both concerned about maintaining the positive mother and daughter relationship they had experienced in earlier times.

Marie's awareness of her own needs and the desire to establish a positive relationship with her mother helped her make the decision to become involved in the *Parents Sharing Books* program in her school. At a time when we believe peer pressure is greater than family influences, Marie chose to participate in something that she felt would enhance the relationship with her mother.

Mrs. Johnson implied that the program helped her realize that children need parents' support even when they are model students. Parents must not overlook the qualities of the *Parents Sharing Books* program. For some, it may provide help in assisting children in their reading ability, but for the Johnsons it enhanced the communication between Marie and her mother.

In addition, Mrs. Johnson feels strongly that parents must be involved with their children at all grade levels. For many parents, sharing books with their children is an on-going activity in the family. But for parents who think that book sharing stops once their children can read independently, participating in the *Parents Sharing Books* program is an opportunity to re-establish the habit of reading with their children at home.

Perhaps the most important parental contribution the Johnsons made after setting the stage for reading and other intellectual activity was to make available books and materials in their home for their children. This did not necessarily mean buying books or journals, but it involved going to the library, borrowing books from friends and neighbors, and making available other sources of books. We believe that parents should make getting books to their children a high priority. It is quite literally providing information and education, not just providing paper with printing on it.

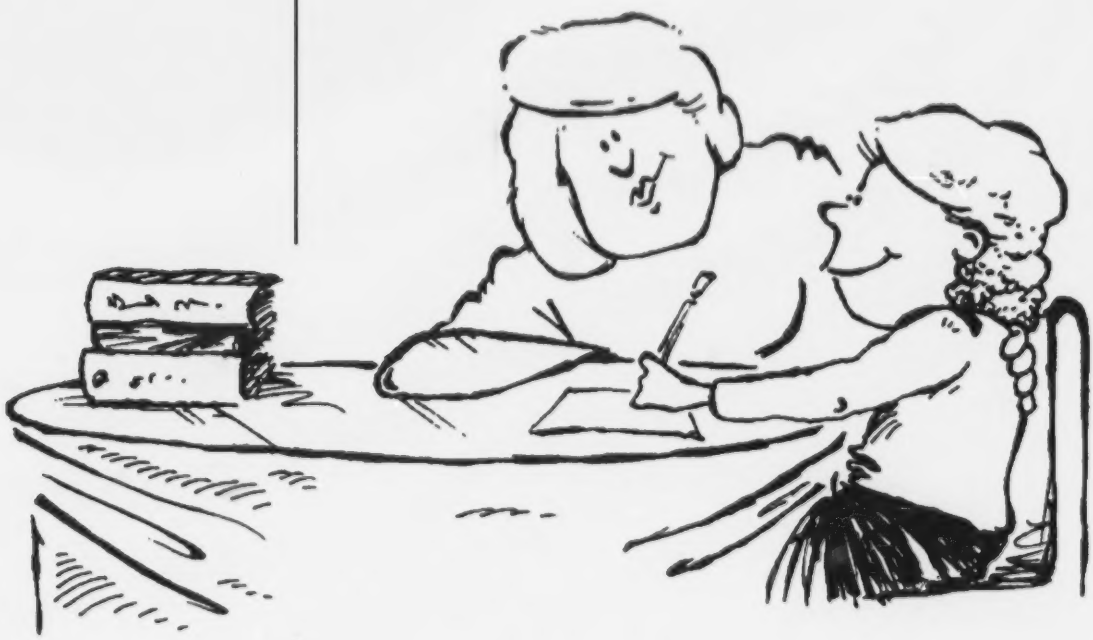
Mrs. Johnson thought that sharing books with her daughter gave her the opportunity to see her child grow and notice how Marie's thinking was becoming more mature. Moreover, their book sharing times helped both Marie and her mother understand each other's point of view. In Mrs. Johnson's words, "we came to know each other better, and I understand myself a little better."

Mrs. Johnson indicated that books gave her the courage to discuss difficult subjects with Marie. When they shared books about problems adolescents commonly experience, Mrs. Johnson said she found it easier to talk to Marie about these issues and concerns than

she normally would. This positive, and sometimes intimate, book sharing has reassured Marie that she can come to her mother with her problems and questions, and her mother will listen.

Because of Mrs. Johnson's suggestions about sharing books with her adolescent daughter, we believe that fiction that deals frankly with the problems youngsters experience during puberty can provide support to parents in discussing these matters with their children. Mrs. Johnson indicates that books can help parents who fear that they cannot talk with their kids about sensitive or personal subjects.

The Johnsons' motive for participating in the *Parents Sharing Books* program was personal rather than academic. Marie wanted a good relationship with her mother, and both she and her mother were willing to devote the time to each other that was necessary to make it work. The fact that Marie wants to continue to set aside time to read and share with her mother, even when they are apart, indicates that something special has occurred between them through the process of sharing books. The relationship that Marie and her mother share today as a result of participating in the *Parents Sharing Books* program will continue to have a positive influence on Marie's personal and intellectual growth in the years to come.



STORY #2

INTRODUCTION

Mr. and Mrs. Smith and their son, Bob, met with the FLC staff after school to discuss their involvement with and share their impressions of the *Parents Sharing Books* program in their school. Even though Mr. Smith would be leaving for work immediately after this late afternoon conversation, he was willing to take the time from his busy and atypical work schedule to meet with us. We feel their story can provide a framework for families like the Smiths, who are trying to resolve ambiguities with work schedules, homework, extra-curricular activities, and time for meaningful book-sharing at home.

THE SMITHS' STORY

MRS. SMITH: Mrs. Lovelace asked us to come today to talk to you about our involvement with *Parents Sharing Books* and we were willing to help her out in any way we could. She is a super person! We haven't been involved in the program that long. We are reading our first book, *The Contender,* and she asked us to come today. But we can share our experiences and attitudes about the program as much as we are able to.

Mrs. Lovelace is a great motivator! When she introduced us to the program and got us involved in it, she called us and invited us to come and see Bob's progress at school. She thought with the progress he was showing at school and the *Parents Sharing Books* program she was doing with parents, we could work together at home as well as at school to help Bob's progress.

[Mrs. Lovelace] is good about keying in on people and her students. She knows what they are concerned with. And she was trying to involve us with Bob's work and progress at school and knew that we are always interested in how he is doing. She invited us to come to the school and see Bob's evaluation in the reading program he is involved in at school. Mrs. Lovelace called us and told us she would like to show us how he was progressing. Usually teachers invite you to come in and tell you something negative about your children. But to hear somebody say something positive about your child, even though he may be just average or below average, that makes you feel good. That even makes him [Bob] feel good about himself.

Our son doesn't like to read. So when Mrs. Lovelace called and asked us to be in *Parents Sharing Books* or try it, we said, "Sure." We are interested in Bob's school work and want to support him as much as we can. Mrs. Lovelace encouraged us to do this and said we might learn something from the books we read that might help us to understand what Bob is going through or might be affecting him . . . this might help all of us.

By her [Mrs. Lovelace] letting us take that book home with us, we found out that the books are very interesting . . .we had fun doing it. Bob and I sit down together and read a few pages. I read a few pages and then he reads a few to me. If there are words he is reading that he

doesn't understand or sometimes I ask him if he knows what that word means and if he doesn't, then I encourage him to get the dictionary. I encourage him to look at the words so that he can find similar words to understand the word he doesn't know.

We are reading *The Contender* and the reason why we picked that book was because we knew that Bob liked sports like baseball, basketball, football, but I didn't know he liked boxing. This book is about boxing. His dad knows a lot about boxing, but I didn't at the time. When we are reading, there are words I may not know about, because I don't know about boxing, but his dad would know about them. I learned a lot about boxing that I didn't know before. I didn't even know Bob liked boxing until we read this book, [but] I just knew he liked other sports. It made my husband notice that Bob liked boxing, too. We found all this out when we read *The Contender!*

MR. SMITH: As a father, this has been very interesting and it's just fun to do! What I mean by fun is that just to start reading as a family has been fun. I think it's been fun finding out what each person in the group knows; finding out that someone in your family didn't know that the other person was interested in this type of reading; finding out that someone in your family knows a lot about a topic that you didn't know they did; or to see someone get interested in a book that you never thought they would be interested in is fun! Bob had fun with this, too.

I work nights and we call each other every night to talk. When we started reading *The Contender,* we would call each other and start talking about the book. Now that's what we talk about when we call every night. [Now] we are saying, "The books good, or what did you think about this part, or I liked this part, what did you think?" Because I work at night, we try to have a plan. That's the only way any kind of situation is going to be successful. Even though I am away when Bob and his mother read, we are still working on this together. We have this plan and do this sequence of reading and calling at night. I find that this way of reading together brings us together on the weekends. During the week, we worry about the day-to-day stresses. Weekends are more relaxed and we can "air-out" so to speak. Weekends are a good time for us to help him [Bob] and get together with each other and enjoy and catch up on the reading that was done that week.

MRS. SMITH: Bob and I read together after he has his homework done. We turn off the TV and he knows that that part of it is hard to do! But as parents, we have to realize that we have to let go of the TV also and help them with their reading. Sometimes we're just as bad. I have to be the one to turn off the TV. We have to be willing to let go ourselves. I can't expect Bob to do it on his own if I'm not willing to do it, too. We do a good job of taking care of our kids' wants and we have to be just as good at giving them the important things that they may not think are important . . . yet! Reading is part of everything and even though Bob doesn't like to read, he will read with us because he knows that reading is important. It is spelling, math, and other subjects. It has something to do with or related to everything. Kids may not know that, but as parents, we know that and need to make sure that our child

develops the habit of reading. Mrs. Lovelace pointed this out to us that reading is everything, too. She encouraged us to give him [Bob] newspapers, magazines, comic books, study materials; whatever, and we can read anywhere in order to let him get interested in reading.

We had to take some time out from reading together just before ISTEP tests. Bob and I went over practice tests and things. It took time away from our reading together, but I realized then what Mrs. Lovelace was emphasizing that reading is reading a lot of different materials and it can be done anywhere. Now we make sure Bob knows that reading can be done from the newspaper, *Sports Illustrated,* and my husband is always pointing out things to read while we're in the car. This emphasizes that you can read wherever you're at.

Mrs. Lovelace encouraged us to get a library card. We're going to make sure we get a library card and use it during the summer to keep this habit up.

Because of the *Parents Sharing Books* program, I spend more time, [and] I make time now to spend with Bob as far as reading goes. We have a good relationship and I think this has encouraged him to want to do better in his reading. I listen to his reading now. I can help him and give him suggestions about reading clearly, slowing down, and pointing out punctuation that he should look for to help him slow down and make his reading clearer. Bob comes to me now and asks, "Do I read better?" Each day I listen, I can tell he's progressing more and more. Tell her about your reading class for Mrs. Lovelace, Bob.

BOB: I have a reading class with Mrs. Lovelace and we work every day on reading and the computer and then we are reading at home. My class evaluation shows that I am improving. I'm going up in my vocabulary and getting a little better in comprehension. That makes me feel good.

MR. SMITH: This makes us see that it is important. I enjoy having Bob read aloud. I think when I have him read aloud to me then I know he is reading. If you send them off to read, they may not read. This way I know he is reading, he's getting the words, and he's understanding what he reads, [and] he's getting the comprehension. That's my method. I like to hear him read out loud.

I would like to see a larger variety of books that we can choose from. Maybe we could survey the parents here [Tolleston] or in other schools like ours to see what everybody likes to read and then make sure the demand is met. It's hard satisfying everybody's interests, but that's how you start getting someone interested in reading. That's where we started with Bob. We know Bob likes sports so that's the kind of book we picked out when Mrs. Lovelace showed us the books. By getting them interested in something, hopefully you can get them interested in reading.

I believe the PSB concept is excellent because it's trying to motivate the parent to get into what children's language and reading should be and they have a great concept. Communication is one of the benefits that enlightens you to be a better communicator. I think it's an

“I believe the PSB concept is excellent because it's trying to motivate the parent to get into what children's language and reading should be . . .”

excellent program, because I can see what it has done for me. It has enlightened me. It's made me see that I need to read much more often and that I set the environment for Bob. I already knew that I liked to read and I still like to read the same type of literature, but I needed to keep a positive attitude about what others like to read and learn how to adapt to other people's things that they like to read, especially in my own family.

Mrs. Lovelace is superb at getting children motivated. She's very good with kids and with parents. You've got the right person in this particular area of your program. I've only met her about four or five times; talked to her a couple of times on the phone. But if she motivates the kids as well as she has motivated me, she's doing an excellent job. She has the key for knowing what people are concerned with and what not. It takes a special person to take or make something that could have been a negative thing and have the people involved come away with a positive feeling. She shows that she really cares about our child. That's very professional. Mrs. Lovelace has a way of involving parents. When new parents came to *Parents Sharing Books*, she introduced them to everyone and took the time to talk to each of us individually.

It takes people and programs like this to make others more aware that education is the kids future. *Parents Sharing Books* and people like Mrs. Lovelace are helping to do that. We [parents] need to do our part, and the kids must understand that they must do their part, too. Together we can come away with good things.

COMMENTARY

The Smiths were just getting started with the *Parents Sharing Books* program, but found Mrs. Lovelace's (PSB leader) parent recruitment approach to be a motivating factor for participating in PSB and PSB's evaluation. Mr. and Mrs. Smith recognized the enthusiasm and concern that the PSB leader has for their son's well-being. As parents, she makes them feel special by calling them on the phone. These phone calls are positive contacts that Mrs. Lovelace makes to parents about becoming involved in the Tolleston's PSB program and sharing student progress in school with parents. The Smiths imply that this same concern, enthusiasm, and commitment is demonstrated at PSB parent meetings. They appreciate the "positive" feelings that have evolved from their acquaintance with Mrs. Lovelace and their participation in PSB; how the PSB leader talks to each parent individually, makes new parents feel welcome, and shares her knowledge of reading, children, and books so that parents can understand and relate to these same situations at home. The PSB leader values the contributions parents can make to their child's education by promoting positive parent involvement experiences. Mr. Smith presumes that any typical parent would respond to leader qualities such as those Mrs. Lovelace possesses.

In addition, they suggest that parents must recognize they have an obligation in carrying their share of the responsibility for developing good reading and study habits at home. They see themselves as role

models in helping their son understand the value of education and the commitment he must make to successfully progress through school. We think this type of home-school relationship is characteristic of leader teams and parents who are implementing successful *Parents Sharing Books* programs in their schools and homes.

In Mr. Smith's opinion, parents must be willing to adapt to their personal situations so that the family continues to support their child's academic life. He states that life can get hectic and we become involved in the hang-ups of everyday living, but parents have the ability to work through this. He suggests that parents must "plan" time to read and share with their children. Mr. Smith implies that "consistency" is important in establishing a family reading program. Mrs. Smith is aware that parents must take the lead in turning the TV off and initiating opportunities for enjoyable book-sharing. PSB staff members must highlight parent attitudes such as the Smiths' when providing training to leader teams that enables them to support parents in their efforts to establish reading habits at home.

Bob, the Smiths' son, is a polite, soft-spoken eighth grader in this neighborhood urban school. Bob enjoys sports and playing in his school's band. He is a typical middle school youth, and like most children his age, he doesn't enjoy doing homework! Bob supported his mother's assumptions about his dislike for reading. But he affirmed his parents' belief that reading and developing study habits are things he must do, and together they can make it an enjoyable activity at home. Because his mother and father took the first step in turning TV off and reserving time to read with him, Bob stated that he enjoyed this time together and can see the progress he is making.

Bob has competed in school and community sports and enjoys participating in band competitions. He acknowledged his father's praise about his fine performance at a band competition. He played a solo piece and stated that he was surprised, but pleased, with his performance. Bob's parents support and offer praise for his accomplishments. This type of parent shows a genuine interest in a child's academic success and recognizes the value of investing additional time in parent involvement programs such as *Parents Sharing Books*.

Bob's parents saw an opportunity to help him improve his reading by becoming involved in the PSB program. By attending Mrs. Lovelace's meeting, they found out that they were able to key-in on Bob's interest in sports as a way to get him involved with reading at home. They thought Mrs. Lovelace's suggestion to pick something a child likes is another good way to get reluctant readers involved in reading at home. The Smiths advocated that parents should "get into a sequence" of reading at home, pick something of interest for the child, read aloud, and make a point to share during "unique" situations. They have established activities and adapted to schedules so that reading has become an enjoyable family event in their home. These methods have worked for them. We feel that their input merits the recognition of parents who may be thinking they do not have the time to read and share with their child.

“His parents saw an opportunity to help Bob improve his reading by becoming involved in the PSB program.”

STORY #3

INTRODUCTION

Karen is a teacher at Wilson Middle School in Muncie, Indiana. This is her second year using the *Parents Sharing Books* program in her school, and it continues to be a success! We believe that Karen's personal ability to adapt PSB to her parents' and students' needs is a decisive factor in the success of Wilson's *Parents Sharing Books* program. Karen is slow to take credit for the program's success in her school, but her story echoes the kind of enthusiasm, dedication, and tenacity necessary to carry out an effective parent involvement program.

KAREN'S STORY

KAREN: Muncie is a typical factory town with a university, Ball State, adding a little bit of class to it. There are two middle schools, Wilson and Northside Middle School, in the Muncie area. Our school is a neighborhood school that has an enrollment of about 700 hundred students. It is just 7th and 8th grade only, and 85 percent of our kids are on free lunches; whereas the other middle school in Muncie has 20 percent of their students on free lunches. They (the administration) expect us to do the same things in both middle schools. We can't do that. Our kids come from a different world than the kids across town.

Many of our students come from illiterate, low socioeconomic families. Our students live in homes that are good examples of "the extended family." There are many students who are living with one parent, maybe the grandparent or an aunt or uncle is raising the child, or there may be a parent in the home, but it is an older sister or brother who is the parent figure to the younger children in the home. Some of our students are the older brother or sister and are fulfilling that role.

Many of our students have never been out of this city. The mall across town may be as far as they ever get away from home. Going to Indianapolis on a field trip is a big deal for many of these children. Their parents love the opportunity to go on a field trip, because many of them have never been out of Muncie.

Our facility is much older than the other middle school. The state has come in and told us that the building must be closed, so a new middle school is being planned. We will include the 6th grade when the new middle school opens. Our new school will be located almost to the county line so that most of or all of the students will be bussed in.

The bussing will be a good thing. Right now, our students can walk to school, and we have a lot of damage being done to the neighborhoods, personal property, and such as the students walk to and from school. We have students coming to our school who are not living in the area or neighborhood. The juvenile center or detention home is across town, but these students are sent over here to school anyway.

It takes a real compassionate person to work at this school. Most of the teachers who do work here have chosen to teach here and be with

these kids. They are compassionate people and can handle the students and know what they need. There's an unconditional support for our students that exists here among teachers. We know about our kids' home lives, and many of us don't shy away from doing all we can to help these kids. We have respect for these kids and in turn they respect us. They don't feel threatened in our classrooms, but all of us understand where we stand and how far we can go.

These kids aren't like your typical middle school student. You don't hear much criticism of one another about what someone is wearing or ostracizing someone because of what they wear. They'll get on one another, but they also know they have to depend on one another to make it. Teachers see that same carry-over in their work and how they work together.

When we set up our parent meetings, we mix types of students and parents. We don't single out just the below-average students and invite their parents to come. We put it on the radio, in the newspaper, over the PA system, send flyers home with all the students, and we have a parent coordinator that calls the parents to get them here. That flyer or cover letter that goes home explains the program, what we will be doing, support we expect from them, and we make it real clear that we are involved with their child and we want them involved.

It gets them here—along with some bribery! We have refreshments, and we provide incentives for them to participate in the activities we have arranged for that evening. We give prizes for various things—finishing one of the activities first, a student who may have both parents here, whatever we can think of. Businesses are good about giving us prizes and coupons when we solicit them. Sometimes it comes out of my pocket when it comes to providing refreshments, but oftentimes the school will provide the drinks from the pop machines here at school.

Sometimes we get the mom here; other times it may be the father, a grandparent, or a neighbor lady. Anybody can come and we have a mixture of parents and adults—parents with below-average, average, and above-average children. We weren't real sure how the two dichotomies would get along, but remember that many of our students come from families who grew up in the same neighborhood and never got out. This was their school, too, and they grew up together. Some of their same teachers are still here. So they know each other from the "neighborhood." We invite anybody. Some parents who are not from this area, like in the county, have heard about it over the radio and have come to participate. They tell us that we've been painted as the "bad" school, but we have something to offer that their school doesn't offer—Math Night for Parents and *Parents Sharing Books*.

I have students who want to come, and they tell me their parents want to come, but then they don't show up. After I begin to ask some questions of the student, I may find out there's no transportation to get here. They may not have a car, or they live too far to walk and the busses don't run after a certain time. We make a phone call or stop by their home and ask them to come. We tell them someone will pick them up!

There are students who want to come and regardless how much we "chip away" at the parent and call them, we just can't get them involved. Then what we do is make sure that child is put with another family or parent that night. We check with the student to make sure they know that parent and will feel comfortable working with them. We make sure he has a ride to and from the school that night. We may not get that parent involved, but the parent sees that we care and continue to be involved with their child.

I have a philosophy of my own about parenting, teaching, and involving parents in the schools. I understand that maybe somewhere you have to draw the line, but as a parent, I look at my own kids and I ask myself what kind of a teacher do I want them to have. That's the kind of teacher I want to be. I want to be asked as a parent to be a participant in their school. Sometimes I'm not asked, and therefore, I don't participate. I take that same thinking into teaching. I've got to ask parents to help me.

I don't get down very often. You just keep plugging along trying to make things work for you. When my own two kids show up with me to these things, other parents know that I'm a mother, as well as their child's teacher. They see that I have multiple commitments just like they do. They see that I'm willing to give to their child what I want for my own.

I want these kids to not only see the value of reading in the basics of life and in their everyday activities, but I want them to appreciate what reading can offer them.

As a teacher, I love to read and at a young age I appreciated the value of reading and coming from a home that supported education and reading. I'm a math teacher with a strong reading background and I want my students to see that reading and math are part of their everyday life. I want these kids to not only see the value of reading in the basics of life and in their everyday activities, but I want them to appreciate what reading can offer them. We read in math class. Sometimes I read to them; other times they may pick a book to read when we're finished with the lesson or assignment. I'd like to receive a set of classics that has been "toned down" for my students. They need to be exposed to books that may resemble some of the problems they are really living, but they also need to see that there is a softer side of life—one that's not all harsh.

I do this kind of teaching with a lot of enthusiasm and commitment—I'm self-driven. I don't need a lot of reward. I just want kids to know that I'm here, I'm interested, and if there's anything extra I can do to help them along, I do it. As a teacher, I try to do the best I can while I have them.

I do my "ground work" when it comes to promoting parent involvement. I try to establish a positive relationship with my parents right away and then when I or the parent coordinator call to ask them to attend parent involvement programs, they are more willing to attend. I do this by contacting parents frequently to let them know positive things about their child. You can't just contact parents when you want something from them. I've got to let them know about the good things their child is doing and that as their teacher, I want this to continue. I come right out and ask them to work with me to help continue these good things.

Parents Sharing Books and Math Night is a real family affair! We plan activities for the little kids so they can participate. We try to do things in nonthreatening ways. When parents first come to the meetings, we may hear that they don't really want to be here. They didn't like school, didn't want to be here as a student, don't want to come back as a parent, and sometimes don't even support their child being in school. We've got to do things that will encourage them to want to come back.

Many of our students are responsible for younger brothers and sisters at home, so we encourage storytelling and reading aloud at these meetings. We provide opportunities for parents and children to read aloud to each other, tell stories, or share with one another a book that other families at the meeting may be reading. We bring in books, paper, pencils, crayons, games, and whatever you can think of to get them involved in positive activities they can do at home with their child. We show them how math and reading relate and some things they can do at home to promote this.

We work in small groups and I like this. Sometimes we've had as many as 80 people here and to be real honest, that's too many. I like it when 30 show up—I can get around to everybody then. I wear my blue jeans just like they do and I get down on the floor or sit around a table to work with them. When they ask me for help, I make them feel like they are doing a good job. I tell them just to ask questions they are interested in finding out for themselves. I tell them, "don't make them feel like you are giving them a test!"

They [parents and children] like to be read aloud to. We try to do that every meeting. We may read to a certain point and then have them do a writing activity like finish the story. The little kids might draw a picture for us and we encourage them to share with the group what they have done. We always do things and then emphasize that they can do the same things when reading at home with their child. We have storytellers come in occasionally and they like that, too.

It's fun to watch what goes on at these meetings, because we insist that our students can't come by themselves. They need to bring a parent or an adult to work with. We actually have the students and parents or adults working together at these meetings. It is so funny, because the lower kids have had to work hard all their lives and the upper kids haven't. When you get the two together, you hear the students who have more difficulty in school showing their parents how to do things or helping them work things out. The better student isn't always that helpful and patient with their parent. Sometimes they don't even know how to help or work with their parent. Typically, we think above average students have strong parents, but not always. Many of them don't know how to help their child on a one on one situation. I think many of those parents, who have children who are doing well in school, are just as glad to be here to learn.

We have students who are bothered by the fact that their parents may not be able to read with them at home or the parents can't help their child with work at home. I encourage both parents and

children to read and do things together by saying, "So, don't let that bother you—learn from each other," or "This is fun reading. You don't have to read every word—skip over the ones you don't need." I'd really like to expand this program and use these same concepts of reading aloud and sharing to help parents with basic reading skills. I think if parents know they can get help along with other parents and adults in a comfortable setting, we can get them in here.

Some are concerned that it will take them too long to read a book. I make them feel they can use the book as long as they need to. They eventually bring it back and no one knows how long they've had it. We have a real laid-back system for checking the books out. You just select a book and bring it back when you're finished. I've lost a couple of books, but that's okay. It's probably in someone's home where there aren't any other books or reading materials.

By the end of the year these parent meetings become social events for them. They offer more comments about what they are doing to help their child at home. They slowly begin to share what is going on in their life. One parent talked about how she used to come home and do more work. Now she helps her child with homework, the child reads to her while she does dishes, and she said they are beginning to talk more. When one parent opens up, the others feel more comfortable doing the same.

I take the information and ideas that are given to me and make them into a program that will fit my parents' and students' needs.

I don't always run the programs the way they say I should in the manual. But this program [PSB] stands on its own. I take the information and ideas that are given to me and make them into a program that will fit my parents' and students' needs. I'm also involved in other Lilly projects, and I think this is why the program has worked. We have the math program, *Parents Sharing Books*, and Teachers under Cover project. I make them all work together. I don't run parents and students into the school for separate meetings and activities. The parents can come in and take advantage of all of this once a month—math and reading in a variety of ways. Students take home the books that I read with the Teachers under Cover project and they let their parents read them. I have kids picking out books that they think their parents will like from the PSB bookshelf as well as the books from Teachers Under Cover.

I can't fill out the forms and evaluations for each program because your forms don't fit my program. But I do know that it's working—these three programs have worked well together for our kind of parent and student. I don't have parents that are comfortable filling out questionnaires. That's threatening to my parents. If I did that to them, they wouldn't come back. But they keep coming back. We have from 30-80 attending the meetings, and it's working or they wouldn't be coming back.

I know it must be doing something for these students, too. They get excited when more books come. They like to see new things and need to know that someone cares out there—not just people inside their world.

COMMENTARY

Behind Karen's easy smile and quick laughter is a leader who implies that she appreciates any type of support, but can carry on if the support is no longer there. She says she is "self-driven" and her experiences as a mother, a teacher at various grade levels, and a school leader are the source of beliefs that she brings to her successful parent involvement program.

In Karen's opinion, PSB leaders in schools such as Wilson, must do preliminary work before they can expect parents to become involved participants. Positive contacts must be made with parents about the progress, behavior, and attitude of their child. Using the telephone to convey "good things" to parents about their child allows for a positive dialogue to develop between the school and home. When phoning isn't possible, a home visit is next on the list! As Karen indicates, "there is always something else I can try when one thing doesn't work."

Karen believes that when teachers implement new programs, parents must be informed about the purpose of the program, what teachers are willing to do, and the role parents are expected to play. She emphasizes "expected", because she feels that if responsibility isn't given back or shared with parents and families for becoming involved in their child's academic life, many will not take the initiative to do this on their own.

She provides a strong model for parents. She demonstrates in various ways that she is involved with their child as a teacher, and she expects them to be involved as parents.

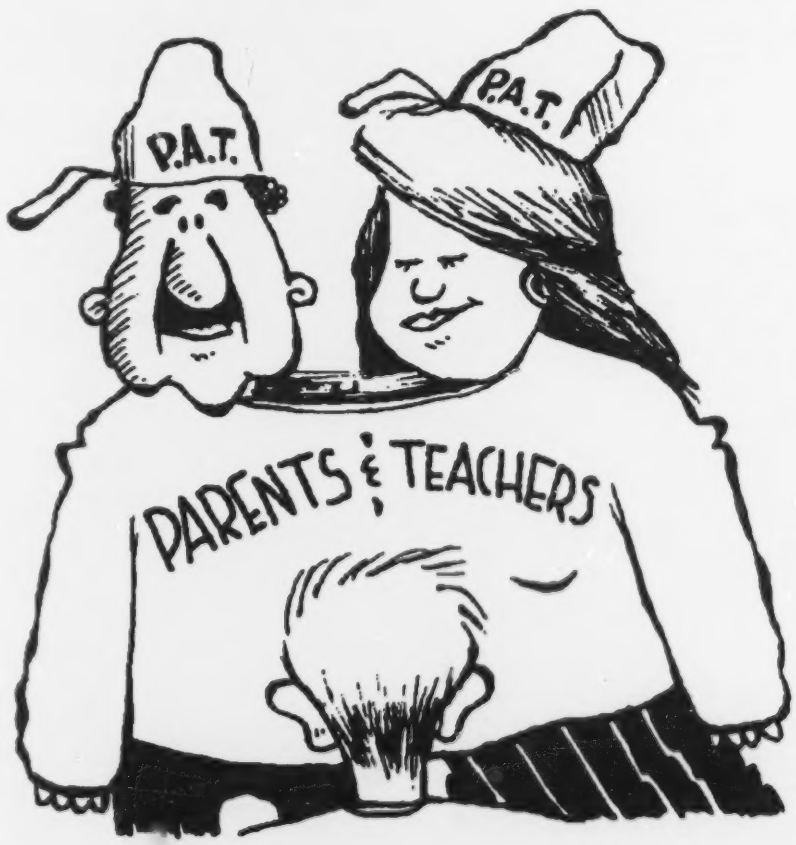
It is evident that Karen invests heavily in this program and in her students. She comes together with parents as an equal partner—she wants as much for their children as she does for her own. Her deliberate way of making parents feel at ease during parent meetings, sharing in small groups, and talking "with" parents, not "to" them, provides a non-threatening environment that encourages not just parents, but families, to return.

Karen recognizes the importance of advertising her *Parents Sharing Books* program. She uses local media, such as the radio station and newspapers to announce and publicize *Parents Sharing Books* meetings. She sees that meetings are announced over the school's PA system and flyers are sent home to all students. Phoning parents or stopping by the home is a major tactic for recruiting parents. Karen utilizes the parent coordinators at her school to contact parents about upcoming meetings and works with other teachers to initiate effective parent involvement programs.

In addition, Karen possesses the ability to take the information and concepts of the *Parents Sharing Books* program and adapt it to her community's needs. She understands that teachers who promote parent involvement must respect their parents' time commitments to other things. Therefore, Karen implies that a practical approach to *Parents Sharing Books* is necessary.

This approach has helped her to integrate other Lilly projects that she is involved with, and thus make the three programs work together so that they have a dynamic impact on parent involvement in her school. She is aware that parents will only give so much time to coming into the school to meet, so she incorporates many activities and sources of information for parents into one evening. Emphasis is placed on making this evening informative as well as social. Parents look forward to returning to learn, to share with their children, and to talk with other parents.

Karen's *Parents Sharing Books* program and other parent involvement approaches are unique to her school's situation because she has adapted them to her community's needs. Karen takes full and effective advantage of the program's flexibility. We believe that Karen's middle school parent involvement program merits the acknowledgement and attention of other PSB leaders who are grappling with parent involvement and PSB implementation in their schools.



STORY #4

INTRODUCTION

Beth was a member of one of the twenty-three leader teams that received PSB training during the Fall 1990 *Parents Sharing Books* Training Seminar. Beth was a teacher for a number of years in the community. She remains active as a parent volunteer at Holyoke Middle School where her daughter attends school. Holyoke is one of two middle schools serving seventh and eighth grade students in this school corporation. Beth spoke frankly with the PSB staff about "Middletown's school situation" and what she regarded as possible reasons for "[the] lack of success of PSB in Middletown middle schools."

BETH'S STORY

BETH: I was motivated to get involved with the *Parents Sharing Books* project (PSB) for a couple of reasons. I was a teacher in the Middletown school system here for quite some time. I am not teaching right now, but I am very concerned with the state of teaching in our community. My concern for teaching is probably the reason that I decided to become the PSB's group leader when the position became vacant last spring. I am kind of embarrassed that PSB did not get off the ground at Holyoke.

I began trying to recruit parents and students for the PSB last spring. I attempted to recruit parents and students for the program last spring. I selected prospective parents and students for the PSB from my circle of friends and associates in Middletown. We didn't have one father wanting to affiliate with PSB. I believe that mothers' commitment to volunteerism in their children's schools is the distinctive characteristic binding the parent participants together. My impression is the mothers began wanting to assist their children's development during elementary school. The parents continue this pattern following their children's moving to middle school. I find it hard to believe that if a mother wasn't involved with their son's/daughter's elementary education that they would begin getting involved at the middle school level.

The parents from my circle had a strong commitment toward education before their involvement with PSB. My impression is that one of the parent(s) had attended college and earned at least a BA degree. I realize that parents outside of my circle were excluded from participating in PSB. I would have liked more heterogeneity within the parental group. We didn't get off to an early start last spring and I believe this contributed to the homogeneous parental selection process. I wish that PSB's administrative staff would provide me some direction on selecting a heterogeneous PSB for Holyoke. Frankly, I believe there are a lot of people in this community who don't care anything about their children's education. I think that families with dual career marriages don't have the time to become deeply involved with their children's schools.

Those mothers that wanted to get involved in PSB had different motives for working with this project. I spoke with one parent who was concerned with her son's reading material. The mother stated that the young man only read golf magazines. She went on to say that she would like him to read other things besides this kind of magazine. Besides, she said that she really was not interested in golf. Therefore, she felt she couldn't discuss the magazines during their discussions. Her husband enjoys golf a great deal and the mother felt the reading and discussion of a golf magazine would help their relationship. I told this mother that it really doesn't matter what your son reads as long as he reads. I went on to say that she should encourage him to read the golf magazine. Her son may get turned on to reading through golf magazines and he might want to read other things.

I learned that other parents thought that the PSB project would help them improve family communication. Parents are learning that the peer pressure plays an important role in our sons/daughters development during these years. We can provide different life alternatives from the peer group through reading and sharing with our middle school students. Parents can use reading and discussing a book as a reciprocal communication bridge with the daughter/son.

I feel that parents should try and praise our children for the positive things that they do in life. Society has changed a great deal since many parents were their children's ages. Our parents didn't feel the need to praise us like we should praise the children of today. I suspect that our parents would tell other people that they were proud of us. But parents would not tell us that they were proud of us. I think that they may have been more humble than today's parents. Then, too, I suspect that our parents wanted to keep us from getting a big head. I believe strongly that our kids need us as much or more than we needed our parents. We should be there for the kids when they come in from school.

My parental experience was the highlight of my involvement with PSB. My daughter, Cindy, and I had a good relationship before our joint involvement with the PSB. Our involvement has helped our relationship in unique ways. I have the opportunity to become familiar with the books that my daughter's peers are reading outside of school. I feel there are some really good young adult books out there. This variety of books didn't exist when parents were our children's ages. I was very gratified when Cindy would come and tell me about good books for us to jointly read. She would say, "Hey, Mom, you should read this book . . . it is really good." I'm glad that I am not the only one recommending books for us to read. Many of us in this group found out that books can be used as vehicles for communicating with our children.

I am uncertain about how helpful I can be concerning your evaluation process. Honestly, I'm kind of embarrassed about PSB's lack of progress at my daughter's school. We got off to a slow start for a couple of reasons in Middletown. The school's support staff tended to forward all Lilly-related information to a certain teacher. I am not sure when she received the PSB information from the Family Literacy Center. I don't

know when she passed the material on to the former PSB leader. The former leader has been involved with different things in the community. I do know that she has been quite busy with her senior and middle school sons' different extra curricular activities. I don't think that she had the time to actually implement PSB at Holyoke. She moved out of her leader position and I moved into this position with the present PSB leader. This was not the smoothest leadership transition. I got involved with the project late. My late involvement did not help the project's future success. I would have loved to use the school's newsletter to inform parents about PSB, but I didn't have the printing schedule for the newsletter. Another problem is that the newsletters from school do not come out on a regular basis. It's hard to know when the deadline is for getting announcements printed in the newsletter.

I feel that our slow start was complicated by our school's non-supportive attitude toward parental involvement with the school. The physical size of our school and the student overcrowding have discouraged parental involvement. The school was built on four different levels. The building was designed to hold several hundred students as opposed to the thousand students who currently attend Holyoke. The school curriculum is organized around the block system. The block system means that students will have sort of a small school environment in a large middle school. Students attend the same cluster of classes with several teachers. The block system and physical size of the building do not support PSB related innovation and expansion to all parents and students in our school.

“I feel that our slow start was complicated by our school's non-supportive attitude toward parental involvement with the school.”

I am a former teacher, and I feel parental involvement with the school is an important component of the children's educational process. My impression is that teachers do not want to work with the parents of a thousand or more students. Teachers appear reluctant to bring the parents into the classroom. Last fall, we attended the parent and student open house at the middle school. I signed up for different school committees. I was never contacted by the teacher who chaired the committees. I have spoken with other parents who signed up for parent and school committees. Their experiences have been very similar to mine. I get involved at school, because in the past, I have personally contacted individual teachers who I knew were involved in intensive class projects and asked if I could help out. Mostly these are classrooms that my daughter has been in. That's how I find out if there are special projects going on. I had signed up to help out in the library, but I was never contacted about coming into the school to help in the library. I approached the librarian about giving her some assistance and shared with her the fact that I had signed up to work in the library, but I was never called. She told me she never saw any cards where parents had signed up to volunteer for certain activities.

I would recommend that the key PSB organizers reconsider sending project materials to the superintendent's office. It appears that PSB material has not been distributed to interested teachers at our school. My impression is that the PSB material just collects dust on some superintendent's desk. Parents would never learn about the project through this distribution process. I recommend that you send

PSB material to one key individual at each school site. I think teachers will make your best PSB leaders. This option is not perfect due to the present demands on teachers' instructional time. Teachers feel a lot of work-related stress depending on the time of year. Teachers must attend and participate in intensive in-service training programs during the two weeks before school starts in August. This two-week period would not be a good time to implement the project. Teachers would not have the quality time necessary to implement the project. We cannot wait to launch the project at the end of the semester. Parents, teachers and students will be tired at this stage of the year. This collective fatigue would not help the prospects of the project with parents and students. We should realize that parents', teachers', and students' enthusiasm for school will last for a few weeks into the semester. We should try and implement PSB during this collective enthusiasm for school. I would recommend that the PSB be implemented during the few weeks following the beginning of school. Potential teacher leaders would have time to adjust their schedule in order to take on this additional task. I have observed that timing mistakes have contributed to the failure of many school-sponsored programs.

COMMENTARY

Beth has had mixed experiences with Middletown's PSB. She served as PSB's leader for part of the last year. Beth had difficulty identifying prospective parents/teachers outside of her social circle in town. She recognized that some parents were already predisposed toward advocating literacy and education for their children. Thus, she recruited a homogenous sample group. The characteristics of this group are not congruent with the proposed target population outline in PSB's goal statement.

Beth thought some participating parents wanted to use books as communication vehicle with their children. For example, Beth and her daughter used joint reading as a means to further build their mother/daughter bond. PSB's related goal of fostering parent and child communication through books has been partially meet in Middletown.

Beth hinted that the Family Literacy Center may find it difficult recruiting parents from the PSB's proposed target population. She implied that parents have different educational values and expectations for their children. She stated that some parents don't care about their children's education. We believe that this may be a correct observation of some parents' educational expectations for their children. We think this type of parental attitude is characteristic of some of the parents in the PSB's proposed target group.

In addition, Beth suggested that we must take a sober view of recruiting middle school students' parents for the local PSB program. Her first-hand knowledge suggested that involved middle school parents were involved elementary school parents. Typically, the mother is the involved parent with the school system. She didn't expect that involved elementary school parents would become involved middle school parents.

In Beth's view, the existence of dual career couples has had a negative impact on the mother's involvement with their children's education. A mother who is working full-time often doesn't have the time to invest in her children's extra educational projects at the school.

Beth implied that the site-based innovative programs often lack the support of the school superintendents' office or site-based management teams. She thought that innovative programs like PSB must be implemented by street-level bureaucrats in order for them to be effective. Beth advocated that the staff from the Family Literacy Center should develop an incentive package for persuading teachers to assume leadership role with PSB. We feel that her suggestion has a great deal of merit. PSB's original proposal outlines some possible incentive program options for local community efforts.

We believe that the leader's investment level with PSB will contribute to the success, mixed success, or lack of success of the program at the local level. Beth's investment was relatively modest with PSB in town. She had been involved in different voluntary programs in earlier years within the community. We believe that this experience should have provided her a framework for resolving ambiguities with different service projects. Specifically, Beth should have contacted PSB's central staff about tips on selecting parents from the target population.

Then, too, PSB's central staff location in Middletown has the potential benefits for the local programs. PSB's central staff should designate a liaison person to interact with leaders on the phone or in person. The absence of a liaison with Middletown contributed to the modest success of PSB in this town.

SUMMARY

Leaders from approximately one hundred schools have received PSB training; sixty-seven Lilly targeted middle schools (see Appendix N), three non-targeted middle schools, twenty-two elementary schools, and six schools outside the state of Indiana (Michigan, Kentucky, and Illinois). Since the existence of *Parents Sharing Books*, there have been over nine hundred parents participating in the program. We had hoped for greater numbers, but schools seem overwhelmed by the idea of adding more responsibility to the already demanding schedule of teachers.

There are still many Lilly-targeted schools throughout the state that have not taken advantage of this opportunity. Those schools who are eligible for PSB scholarships and who have not taken advantage of this gratis proposal were contacted by phone. We were interested in knowing why they did not react to an opportunity to involve parents in literacy. Some of the feedback received was:

"The opportunities to participate in these Lilly projects are wonderful, but we can't do all of them."

"We are just finding it difficult to find any teachers willing to take on more responsibilities that require their own personal time."

"Our school is already involved in other Lilly projects for the middle school and just can't find the time or the resources for taking on more."

"This school is having a difficult time getting parents involved . . . parents just aren't interested in getting involved with the school."

"We're involved in performance-based assessment, and to be honest, we just don't have the time."

. . . parents just aren't interested in getting involved with the school."

As the *Parents Sharing Books* project moves onto its final step, "reaching out" continues to be the focus—reaching out to those hard to reach. It is worthwhile to note that "reaching out" takes aim at broader countenances as the result of contacts with schools and our case study approach to evaluation. Because of those contacts and conversations with principals, teachers, parents, and students, it is worthwhile to note that we may need to elaborate on the phrase "reaching out to hard-to-reach parents," since our evaluation indicates it is at least as much a problem of "hard-to-reach schools."

The stories of the PSB schools who participated in our case study approach to evaluation of the *Parents Sharing Books* project illuminated changes in the structure of the American family and in the demographic configuration of our society. The old model of parent involvement—non-working parents volunteering at the school site—becomes impractical. The staff at the Family Literacy Center must continue to generate outreach strategies to involve the parents of the 90s and beyond, and must customize its parent involvement program to meet the needs and values of a complex society.

We are trying to bring about attitudinal change, which the most enlightened action or program can only marginally influence. Every individual—students, parents, educators, legislators, and communities—has to understand the extent to which each of us is central to healing our divisions when it comes to improving the interaction between families and schools.

In the fitting words of Mr. Smith, "It takes people and programs like this [PSB] to make others more aware that education is the kid's future. *Parents Sharing Books* and people like Mrs. Lovelace are helping to do that. We [parents] need to do our part, and the kids must understand that they must do their part, too. Together we can come away with good things." Mr. Smith's testimony suffers from few illusions and so constantly underscores the interdependence of all who desire success for children.

Today's educators recognize parents as valuable partners in educating children. Meaningful and effective parent involvement encourages children and helps them succeed in school. The data collected for the *Parents Sharing Books* Annual Report 1991-1992 reveals that teachers who succeed in involving parents in book sharing with their children and parents who succeed in promoting positive book-sharing experiences at home are successful because they work at it.

The path to success in every instance of developing academic success ends in the homes of families like the Smiths, the Johnsons, and the many families who are adjusting home habits, behaviors, and attitudes, and are choosing to participate in the *Parents Sharing Books* programs in their schools. To get to this point required effort and a strong partnership between these families and PSB leaders like Patricia Lovelace, Karen Lykens, Sue Miller, Alanaugh Pimlot, Artis Hoffman, Gloria King, Deborah Bova, Francie Klinge, Carol Stremming, Carolyn Yeager, Marilyn Conder, Darla Staley, Charlotte Smith, Sidenia Moses, Cathy Burke, and others like them—a partnership that crossed such bridges as time, attitudes, and habits regarding parent involvement, and sharing books and other literacy activities at home.

We may not be successful in getting all parents to participate in PSB, but we certainly will not see any accomplishments if we do not continue this endeavor. A growing body of literature continues to point to the importance of including families in education initiatives. The *Parents Sharing Books* project continues to generate outreach strategies to involve today's parents. This calls for establishing partnerships between families, schools, and other institutions that encourage parents to be at the center, not the sidelines, of their children's learning.

Our commitment is based on the belief that the majority of parents want what is best for their children and they want to help their children achieve success, but oftentimes, both schools and parents need assistance if they are to work in innovative ways as equal partners. Initiatives for improving home-school relationships reflect the project's belief in the power of parents and our obligation to obtaining new

knowledge, innovative approaches, positive practices, and strong partnerships resulting from productive *Parents Sharing Books* programs that will bring about family interactions that advance children's aspirations and improve learning for children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This section summarizes leader-team, parent, and child recommendations for improving the *Parents Sharing Books* project. Some leaders offered suggestions during the interviews. Some parents (about 30%) and students (about 10%) wrote comments and suggestions about the *Parents Sharing Books* program. Several of the recommendations reflect the difficulties that can be expected when starting a new program and getting parents and teachers involved. The recommendations that follow may provide assistance for further program development. They are the result of staff review of the data from the second year of the project.

1. Motivation of leader teams is vital for a successful implementation of the *Parents Sharing Books* program.

   1.1 Develop specific strategies and activities to motivate leader teams during the training seminar.

   1.2 During training seminars use testimony of mentor teams and a video tape to instill a sense of commitment in leader teams.

   1.3 Make a site visit to each participating school. Meet with leader teams to discuss progress of their PSB program and provide support and direction for continuing the program.

   1.4 Help leader teams implement action plans by suggesting a schedule for meetings; make it clear that they may adapt the program to meet the needs of their community.

   1.5 Make recommendations for specific roles parent leaders can take in assisting and supporting teacher leaders in the implementation of the program.

   1.6 Minimize the amount of paper work that leaders are presently involved in; i.e., possibly eliminate pre-survey work and concentrate on evaluation that can be beneficial to leaders in demonstrating the success and effectiveness of their program.

   1.7 Provide incentives for teacher participation.

   1.8 Insist on administrative support from schools.

   1.9 Develop approaches for sharing books that directly link learning in the classroom to learning at home.

   1.10 Increase number of Fall 1992 training seminars. Conduct eight PSB Regional training seminars. These training seminars will take place early in the fall so that leader teams can kick off their PSB programs at the beginning of the school year. Seminars will be held in Evansville, August 20; Valparaiso, August 25; Richmond, August 26; Bloomington, August 27; Terre Haute, August 28;

Fort Wayne, September 2; Jeffersonville, September 3; and Indianapolis, September4.

2. Since motivation and commitment of parents are a key to the success of *Parents Sharing Books*, efforts must be made to inspire these parents.

   2.1 Provide leader teams with the skills they need to work effectively with parents.

   2.2 Encourage leaders to make personal contact as a key approach in recruiting parents.

   2.3 Develop activities and demonstrations for the training seminar to help leader teams recruit and motivate parents in their program.

   2.4 Provide leader teams with information that can help them facilitate effective and informative parent meetings.

   2.5 Develop approaches for sharing books that directly link learning at home to the learning taking place in the classroom.

   2.6 Provide parents with techniques and activities that parents can visualize and understand what it means to "interact" and "use higher level questions."

   2.7 Provide sets of visual aids to accompany series of training video tapes for leaders and parents.

3. Evaluation data must be expanded to include feedback from participants and non participants.

   3.1 Collect more personal feedback from participants during site visits.

   3.2 Collect information from leader teams who have been unsuccessful in implementing *Parents Sharing Books*.

   3.3 Collect information from leader teams and school administrations who have been successful in implementing *Parents Sharing Books*.

   3.4 Collect information from leader teams who received PSB training, who implemented the program for one semester or year, and then became inactive in PSB.

   3.5 Collect information from principals and other school administrators who have not taken the opportunity to participate in the *Parents Sharing Books* project.

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Photo supplied by the IU Family Literacy Center

Middle-school students and their parents attend a pizza party at Oak Hill Middle School in Evansville following their participation in the "Parents Sharing Books" project coordinated through the IU Family Literacy Center on the Bloomington campus.

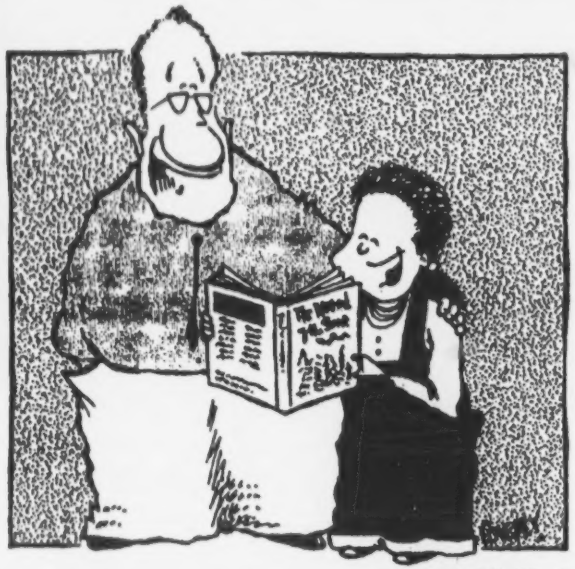


Illustration by David Caverly

Parents Sharing Books

IU reading project helping build stronger family relationships

By RICHARD GILBERT
IU News Bureau

Carl Smith and his 13-year-old son were in conflict. Seen in one light, it was the common tension between a teen-ager asserting his independence and a parent who insisted on a clean room and completed homework.

But Smith was concerned, so he seized the initiative when his son began taking excitedly about *Dune*, the science fiction novel he was reading. Smith, an education professor at IUB, started reading the book too, and talking about it with his son.

"It was a very important event in our lives," he recalled of that time 11 years ago.

"Our relationship really changed as a result," he said. "It sounds trite, but we became more like friends than like father

"The [illegible] of parent and child is becoming greater all the time. There is great discouragement because we allow it to happen and it [illegible] especially when all the distractions [illegible] and have some kind of [illegible] — like a book."

Carl Smith,
director of the IU Family Literacy Center

"This program is really adaptable. Each community may have found different ways to do things. We think [illegible]"

through eight to become involved, and more than the targeted school systems are eligible if they can pay for training (which can be on-site).

"This program is really adaptable," Shermis said. "Each community has found different ways to do things. We think that is a strong point — it can fit your community."

The project has been financed by a $287,000 Lilly Endowment grant, which ends in December. The Family Literacy Center is applying for renewed Lilly funding but is also seeking other avenues of support to carry on.

"We think this is a way for corporate America to make a moral decision to help people, other than just selling them products," Smith said. "The separation of parent and child is becoming greater all the time.

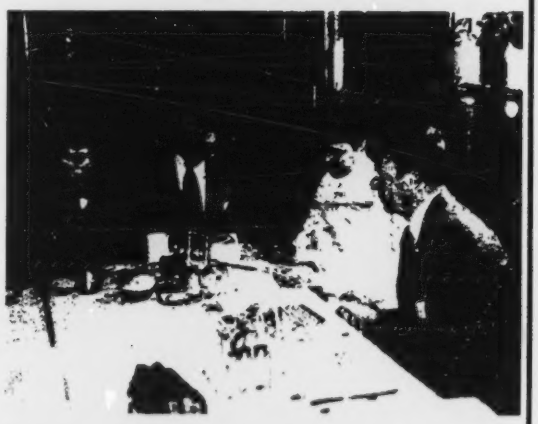
APPENDIX B: *READING TODAY*, Vol. 8, No. 5, April/May 1991

Literacy center makes reading a family affair

by Richard Stewart

Many adolescents and their parents don't even talk to each other, let alone read together. Many other parents can't help their young children with reading because their own literacy skills are weak. Indiana University's Family Literacy Center (FLC) is working to help families overcome these problems and learn to build bonds through reading.

The FLC runs two major projects that focus on reading and learning at home. One project produces a monthly audio magazine for primary grade children and their parents. The other encourages middle school children and their parents to read books together and share their reactions. These and other programs fulfill the FLC's purpose of conducting research and offering services that improve family communication and literacy.



Parents and teachers discuss book-sharing strategies with FLC representative Jack Humphrey (right).

Magazine stresses intergenerational literacy

The monthly audio magazine, called ***Parents and Children Together,*** contains a tape and accompanying text designed to help both parents and children improve their literacy skills. The magazine is written so that parents with poor literacy skills can read along with the tape. "Parents can listen and read or they can simply listen while they jog or drive to work," says editor Michael Shermis. "The read-along stories can also serve as models for parents on how to read stories to their children."

Parents and Children Together focuses on the parent/child relationship as a springboard to learning. The first half of each issue covers topics such as linking reading and writing, motivation and learning, self-esteem, math, science, and discipline. The second half of each issue contains read-along stories for children from 4 to 10 years of age. Some recent story titles include "The Great Lunch Disaster," "The Dragon, the Unicorn and the Caterpillar," "A Time for Giving," and "Jellybean Adventures."

> The FLC is working to help families learn to build bonds through reading.

Each issue also contains learning activities for families to do together, answers to parents' questions about education and learning, articles on methods for improving family literacy (an article by First Lady Barbara Bush appears in a recent issue), and suggested books for parents and children. The dramatic set of young adult books for parents and teens to read independently and then discuss together. In the fall of 1991, this program will be opened up to all schools interested in training leaders to start "Parents Sharing Books" programs.

In describing the motivation behind the project, FLC director Carl Smith states, "Adolescents need to see that their parents have ideas about the things teens think about. By discussing the same book together, they focus on something outside their relationship as child and parent. They begin to think together, and gradually books and their relationship both look much more attractive."

Teachers' reactions to the "Parents Sharing Books" program have been extremely positive:

> All who attended were enthusiastic, and they represented students we were targeting (low-end or problem readers). (Indiana State University School, Terre Haute, Indiana)

> Success—enthusiastic parents. Several kids who did poorly are now reading. In addition, kids are using dialogue journals to write to parents. Even nonattending parents are interested. (Creston Jr. High, Indianapolis, Indiana)

> No problems! In fact, one parent has volunteered to organize a special project to purchase incentives when students complete their books. I've always wanted an incentive program for middle school students! (Owen Valley Middle School, Spencer, Indiana)

Parents were equally enthusiastic. One parent said

CLEARINGHOUSE ON READING AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS
Indiana University
2805 E. 10th Street, Suite 150
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Parent Involvement in Your School

By Richard D. Stewart and Marjorie R. Simic

What is parent involvement?

In recent years, parent involvement in education has become a hot topic in both professional teaching circles and the media. Educational journals, popular periodicals, radio, and television have all entered the growing debate on how much parents should contribute to their children's schooling. A number of factors have arisen as key topics in this debate, including the role of parents as decision-makers, parents as teachers, advocacy of students' rights and welfare by parents, school support for parent involvement in education and individual training and support for parents.

The issue of **decision-making** relates to how much parents should contribute to choices such as individual instructional plans for special education or gifted students and which school or program a child will attend. Such decisions can be made at either the individual or council level, but they, like other aspects of parent involvement, should be part of an organized approach that is integrated into the curriculum.

Parents as teachers encompasses anything parents do in school, at home, or in the community to contribute to students' success in learning, for instance, home tutoring programs, homework helper projects, and parents

Finally, **individual training and support** can include formal counseling, courses or data that help parents learn a second language, deal with the stress of parenting, or find out about available health and social services, joint support groups or school policies. Parent training and support also can be informal, such as when parent and teacher communicate in one-on-one discussions, home visits or phone calls.

Benefits of Parent Involvement

Research has shown that when parents are intimately involved in a child's schooling, her academic achievement and self-esteem are enhanced. Parent involvement also helps parents and schools. Parents improve their own self-worth and acquire useful skills and schools become better at what they do through enhanced parent/teacher understanding and directedness toward common goals. Finally, when parents actively participate in education, the community as a whole becomes a better place. Because the basic units of which it is composed — Families — become more integrated into the democratic system through decision-making and increased awareness.

Parent Involvement Materials

In a similar fashion, Family Focus: Reading and Learning Together (American Newspaper Publishers Association) promotes a broadly based approach to enhancing reading and thinking skills. The program targets parents and children in elementary and middle schools and includes information on extending the program to the community level. The project offers advice and materials for reading specialists or Newspapers in Education (NIE) coordinators to use in conducting 90-minute training sessions for parents. In these sessions, new and innovative ways to encourage students to read, discuss and think more creatively and effectively are introduced.

Lee and Marlene Canter's Parents on Your Side (Lee Canter & Associates) is designed specifically to help teachers become more successful in gaining parental support, recognizing problems in communication with parents, and a number of other areas related to parent/teacher interaction. The authors provide sample family newsletters, homework calendars, home-school contracts and other items that can help to develop greater rapport between families and teachers. The book is especially appropriate for teachers who want to adopt a more structured approach to dealing with parents.

The program described in Give Reading a Chance, by Cindy Rutherus, is more teacher-student

PSB staff members provide ongoing assistance and counseling for parents and teachers in implementing the program in schools and communities. Follow-up meetings to reinforce what was learned in the initial training, answer questions and assist with problems of parent-teacher teams are also part of the program.

Topics covered in the PSB training seminars include strategies for talking about books with adolescents, tips on motivating reluctant readers, book selection techniques and suggestions on obtaining additional reading material for the program. Parents, students and teachers benefit from PSB through enhanced communication, better reading comprehension and discussion skills and greater appreciation of reading and writing as vital parts of everyday life.

Another Family Literacy Center project, Parents and Children Together, is geared to children ages 4-10 and their parents. Parents and Children Together includes a monthly magazine and audio cassette that helps parents read and write with their children, speak and listen more effectively with them, develop their own literacy skills and strengthen overall family communication.

Each issue contains answers to parents' bout learning, helpful hints to parents about home reading, suggested books, read-along stories and activities for parents and children to do together.

Recent issues of Parents and Children Together have covered topics such as learning math at home, stress and school performance, parents as models and stretching young minds in the summertime. Using the Parents and Children Together materials can give parents new insights into relating more effectively with their

APPENDIX C: *INDIANA READING QUARTERLY*, Vol. XXIV, No. 1, Fall 1991

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE AGENDA FOR THE FIRST MEETING: STARTING PSB AT HOME

I. WELCOME

Warm up activity

II. WHAT IS PARENTS SHARING BOOKS?

Brief overview of program

III. WHY SHOULD I BECOME INVOLVED IN PSB?

Benefits of parental involvement and participating in PSB

The importance of reading for pleasure at home

ACTIVITY: ASSESSING MY OWN READING ATTITUDES

INTERACTION: DISCUSSION OF PERSONAL READING ATTITUDES

IV. HOW CAN I DO PSB AT HOME?

Explanation of how participants and children share books from the PSB Bookshelf

Description of the PSB Bookshelf

ACTIVITY: BROWSING THROUGH THE BOOK COLLECTION

INTERACTION: OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BOOKS

Opportunity to ask for assistance in selecting a book

Select a book to share at home

V. HOW CAN I FIND TIME FOR PSB?

Setting time aside for reading

Helping to make reading a habit at home

ACTIVITY: BECOMING AWARE OF MY DAILY ACTIVITIES AND MAKING TIME FOR PSB

VI. WHAT QUESTIONS DO I HAVE ABOUT PSB?

INTERACTION: PARTICIPANTS HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS

Provide input about the schedule for future meetings

VII. CLOSING

Participants complete end-of-session rating

Don't leave without a book!

We hope to see you at the next meeting on _____.

A journey of 1,000 miles begins with a single step
–Lao-Tzu (Fifth Century B.C.)

APPENDIX E: SAMPLE LEADER GUIDE FOR PSB MEETING

Read the information that follows in this section of the manual (pages 36-81) prior to your meeting. In order to assist you in presenting the information in this section, we provide an outline and notes about significant points and details to include in your presentation. These are guides to ensure that the purposes and participant outcomes for this meeting are achieved.

Remember, when meetings start and end as scheduled, and when the meeting agenda is accomplished each session, participants feel positive about future meetings. When participants recognize their own contributions as important, then they are doubly motivated to increase their involvement. If the leader allows meetings to drag on past the scheduled time, some individuals to dominate, and some to sit uninvolved, participants lose commitment and motivation, and then may miss meetings.

PURPOSE:

To acquaint particpants with the *Parents Sharing Books* (PSB) program.

PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES:

Participants will choose a book from the PSB Bookshelf and begin to share it with their child(ren) at home.

LEADER RESOURCES:

Duplicate the ***handouts, activity sheets,*** and ***evaluation forms*** for this section. You may want to make copies of the ***agenda*** for this meeting to share with participants. Materials to be duplicated in this section include the following:

Movement towards Adulthood (Handout 2.1)
Listening and Self-Esteem (Handout 2.2)
Assessing Reading Attitudes (Activity 2.1)
Daily Activity—Finding Time (Activity 2.2)
End-of-Session Rating (Evaluation 2.1)
Parent Pre-Survey (Evaluation 2.2)
Student Pre-Survey (Evaluation 2.3)

Other materials include:

Leader Action Plan (Leader Material 2.1)
Leader Pre-Survey (Leader Material 2.2)
Making Sure Reading Is a Pleasure at Home (Leader Material 2.3)
3 x 5 cards
Pencils
Crayons/markers
Name Tags
PSB Bookshelf (These are the books you have selected for your collection to use with your parents. You may wish to have brief

annotations for these books in order to give parents descriptions that they can browse through during and between meetings.)

I. WELCOME PARTICIPANTS

Warm Up Activity:

Optional Activity A

- Have participants write the title of their favorite book on a note card.
- Leader collects the cards and shuffles them. Pass the cards out, one per person.
- Leader instructs participants to find the person whose card they have, and ask why the book they listed is his or her favorite.

Optional Activity B

- Have participants get into pairs. Leader provides a few minutes for participants to get acquainted.
- Have people introduce their partner to the group after a few minutes of getting acquainted.

Optional Activity C

- Give each person a name tag.
- Have each person write their name on the tag and add pictures, symbols, and designs that describe or tell something about themselves.
- Have participants explain their name tags. (Leader may want to collect the name tags at the end of the meeting to use at the next meeting.)

II. WHAT IS PSB?

Notes:

Briefly describe the training that the leaders received.

Emphasize the goals of the program:

- To train parents to share books with their child(ren)
- To hold meetings that are informative in helping parents promote reading at home
- To provide parents in the group with opportunities to share the experiences with PSB
- To act as support for each other and to involve others in PSB
- To promote reading as enjoyment

PSB is not meant to teach reading, although it does provide practice in reading; rather, it provides parents and children with opportunities to enjoy reading and to discover the many ways it can be used to enrich experiences in family life.

III. WHY SHOULD I BECOME INVOLVED IN PSB?

NOTES:

PSB is about family communication more than anything else. Most parents want to feel close to their children, and reading books together is one convenient way to create a parent-child bond. Through a book, the parent and the child can share an adventure or a personal experience that weaves a bond between them. Events in the book give them something to talk about outside their own parent-child relationship.

Foremost in the minds of most parents, of course, is their desire to give their children some benefit. They want their children to succeed in school and to be fluent in reading so that they will have the literacy skills needed to march through school and into a self-supporting job. To become fluent readers, children need to practice. Reading together assures parents that valuable reading will be accomplished.

By the very nature of book conversations, parents and children will also establish a pattern of communication. They will learn that each has interesting ideas—sometimes conflicting ideas—about the subjects and the events that occur in the books that they are reading. And that's okay. With that backdrop, they may move to important events in their own lives and discuss them with the same freshness and directness that they had while discussing the events in a book. Improved family communication is a significant outcome of this program.

Because the parent and the teacher have some common objectives in reading and discussing books, home/school communication may also improve. Parents and teachers both have a common bond in working with children over interesting books. Finding common ground is the first step in any communication. Once the parent, the student, and the teacher all have the same book to discuss, they may be able to branch out to other concerns, for example, expanding reading interests or pushing themselves to examine ideas critically.

For some parents, the best thing about a PSB program is that it brings together those people who want to participate in the academic life of their children. By sharing successes and problems, they develop a mutual support system that enables parents to grow by listening and helping one another. A group like this also gathers resources, such as books, audio tapes, video tapes, reviews; it also draws in experts or people with experience in working with children's books.

Joining a PSB group gives each parent the resources, the wisdom, and the camaraderie of like-minded parents—all of which help promote family communication and literacy.

IV. HOW CAN I DO PSB AT HOME?

NOTES:

Explain/describe your PSB Bookshelf (display the collection in some attractive way).

- a collection of 50 books
- a variety of titles and reading levels
- a variety of reading interests
- used only by parents who are participating in PSB
- Participants will select books from the bookshelf and take books home to share with their child(ren).
- Explain your policy/guidelines for taking books.
- Tell parents where books will be located.
- Show parents that they can get an idea of what the book is about by reading the back cover, or suggest they might want to read a few pages.

Suggest ways parents can share books at home.

- They may want to read the book together and talk about it as they are reading it.
- Parents and children can read the book on their own and then come back together to talk about it.
- Events or situations in the book may provide opportunities for them to discuss important concerns and issues that might otherwise have been difficult to talk about.
- Place emphasis on making the reading and time together enjoyable.
- Encourage parents to return to the PSB Bookshelf frequently; don't wait for the next meeting.
- Encourage parents to recommend books to others in the group.
- Tell parents that they don't have to finish a book that is uninteresting. Stop, and choose a different book!

ACTIVITY:

Let participants browse through the PSB Bookshelf.

INTERACTION:

Help participants with book selection.

- Answer any questions they may have about the books.
- (Optional) Serve refreshments, if appropriate, during the time participants are discussing titles and making their selections.

V. HOW CAN I FIND TIME FOR PSB?

NOTES:

Emphasize the importance of having a positive attitude and of parents setting aside time to share books with their children at home. Participants are asked to think about their own attitudes toward reading. Place your emphasis on helping parents become good models for reading at home.

LEADER DIALOGUE:

In starting any project or task, we need the right attitude. Others are sensitive and perceptive as to how we feel. This is true with respect to the attitudes we have about reading. If we want our children to value reading and have a positive attitude about it, then we must also display these qualities. We cannot expect our children to enjoy reading if we are negative or indifferent toward it.

The first step in making reading a habit at home is to read at home. Our children must see us reading at home. This tells them that we value reading and make time for it.

Think about these questions: What are your attitudes about reading? How do you feel about reading at home or during free time? Are you a good model for promoting reading in your home?

ACTIVITY:

Take time now to reflect about how you model reading at home. Take a few moments now to complete Assessing Reading Attitudes (Activity 2.1).

INTERACTION:

Participants share their responses. Discuss some of the reasons why reading at home is difficult. Have those who read on a regular basis share how they established that habit. (Parents will want another copy of this activity to share with their child to find out the child's reading attitudes).

NOTES:

This next part emphasizes the importance of setting aside time for reading. Participants are offered suggestions and support for trying to establish reading time at home.

LEADER DIALOGUE:

Now that we have established that we must have positive attitudes about reading and become models for reading at home, we need to talk about finding time to do this reading.

NOTES:

Participants may need suggestions on how to get reading together started at home. The following activity and discussion offers helpful hints for getting their child involved in book sharing at home.

LEADER DIALOGUE:

Let's move on to thinking about how you can go home and convince your child to do the book sharing with you. Our next activity might provide support and suggestions for getting started at home.

Many of us have routines that we follow from day to day. Some of us may have the habit of reading daily at home, and some of us may not have made reading a part of our everyday activity. We want to help you make reading a habit.

In trying to find time for something new in our already hectic lives, it helps to become aware of where our time goes.

(Pass out **Daily Activity: Finding Time (Activity 2.2).** This activity may help you to find time to read with your child[ren].)

During the next week, take some time to complete the weekly activity sheet. Write down what you do during the day. Keep track of your daily routine for one week.

Once you have completed the chart, look at it to see where you are spending time doing something that isn't that important. Look for time that could become time you spend sharing books with your child(ren).

Maybe you found that you watch TV more than you thought you did. Turn the TV off and schedule that time for reading. Maybe your chart shows that you spend a lot of time in the car running errands or taking children to and from practices, lessons, and other school activites. Use that time in the car with your child for reading. Listen to your child read and talk about the book while you drive.

There may be time during the day that you wait for things such as waiting for appointments or waiting for the bus to come. Instead of sitting around waiting, use the time to read together.

Look for times in your chart when you can read. Then schedule a definite time during each day to read with your child(ren) or have that time become time that the entire family reads. Make reading a part of your family's daily routine. This is how we get into the habit of reading.

Now that we have talked about modeling reading and making time for reading, let's think about how you are going to go home and start PSB with your child. Here is an activity that might help you prepare.

ACTIVITY:

Role-Play: "Starting PSB at Home."

- Have participants get into groups of three.
- Someone in the group plays the parent; another plays the child with whom the parent wants to read; the third person observes the role playing and interaction between the parent and child.

- Have the observer report to the whole group strategies or approaches that worked/didn't work in getting the child involved.

Before role playing, inform participants that as follows:

- The age of the child is the same age as the children you will be working with in your PSB program.
- The child is watching TV.
- The parent must get the child involved in reading.
- The child/player may show typical resistance but eventually will come around.

During role playing:

- The child responds/reacts to the parent's statements as most children might respond.
- The parent continues to respond to the child's reactions.
- The observer records how the child reacts to certain parental approaches.

After role playing:

- The observer shares with the group how the parent and child were able to read together.
- Participate in a group discussion about positive and negative approaches for getting PSB started at home.

Discuss the transparency Making Sure Reading Is a Pleasure at Home (Leader Material 2.2).

VI. WHAT QUESTIONS DO I HAVE ABOUT PSB?

NOTES:

Use this time to provide additional motivation for parents. Ask questions that will start participants thinking about how and when they can get started. Instead of asking, "Can you do this?" ask participants, "How are you going to get this started at home?"

ASK:

- "What are your ideas for taking this program home and getting it started?"
- "When do you think would be the best time to read in your family?"
- "Don't forget that it is important to pick a good place to read. Where are you going to read so that it is enjoyable?"

(After questions and discussion, have participants discuss when they want to meet. Participants should know before they leave when

the group will meet next. Leaders might want to suggest possible dates and times.)

- When a date has been decided upon, have the participants write it on their agenda at the bottom of the page. Inform participants that reminders will be sent out about the next meeting.

VII. CLOSING

Reminders for Leader:

- Have participants complete the questionnaire **End-of-Session Rating (Evaluation 2.3).**
- Have participants complete the questionnaire **Parent Pre-Survey (Evaluation 2.2).**
- "Your input is valuable because it will help us improve our program."
- Have participants take a questionnaire to be completed by their child(ren) **Student Pre-Survey (Evaluation 2.3).**
- "Your child's input is important. It is the student who will benefit most from your involvement and from your wanting to make reading a habit at home."
- "Have your child return his or her questionnaire to me at school, or bring it with you to our next meeting."
- Make sure that everyone has a book to take home.
- Tell participants you look forward to seeing them at your next meeting. Send them off motivated and appreciated for taking the time to be a part of PSB.

APPENDIX F: PARENTS SHARING BOOKS FALL 1991 BOOKSHELF

Stand and Deliver	Nicholas Edwards
The Baby Sitters Club #1: Kristy's Great Idea	Ann M. Martin
The Contender	Robert Lipsyte
Bo Jackson: Playing the Games	Ellen Emerson White
Dragonwings	Laurence Yep
Trouble River	Betsy Byars
Circle of Gold	Candy Dawson Boyd
Bingo Brown and the Language of Love	Betsy Byars
Marshmallow Muscles, Banana Brainstorms	Karen T. Taha
Welcome Home, Jellybean	Marlene Fanta Shyer
Bridge to Terabithia	Katherine Paterson
Where the Red Fern Grows	Wilson Rawls
Tuck Everlasting	Natalie Babbitt
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer	Mark Twain
Sarah Bishop	Scott O'Dell
The Land I Lost: Adventures of a Boy in Vietnam	Huynh Quang Nhoung
Anne of Green Gables	L. M. Montgomery
Hatchet	Gary Paulsen
Wrestling with Honor	David Klass
Number the Stars	Lois LowryPoetry USA, Paul Molloy, ed.
Eight Tales of Terror	Edgar Allan Poe
Blizcat	Robert Westall
Dicey's Song	Cynthia Voigt
Are You There God? It's Me Margaret	Judy Blume
Ring of Endless Light	Madeleine L'Engle
The Sign of the Beaver	Elizabeth George Speare
The Hobbit	J.R.R. Tolkien
A Wrinkle in Time	Madeleine L'Engle
Watership Down	Richard Adams
Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH	Robert C. O'Brien
The Chocolate War	Robert Cormier
Deenie	Judy Blume
A Day No Pigs Would Die	Robert Newton Peck
Cracker Jackson	Betsy Byars
Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry	Mildred D. Taylor

Park's Quest	Katherine Paterson
The Pigman	Paul Zindel
The Outsiders	H.E. Hinton
Johnny Tremain	Esther Forbes
The Incredible Journey	Sheila Burnford
The Pistachio Prescription	Paula Danziger
Bunnicula: A Rabbit Tale of Mystery	Deborah & James Howe
All Creatures Great and Small	James Herriot
Deathwatch	Robb White
The Westing Game	Raskin
The Bell Jar	Sylvia Plath
The Haunting of Frances Rain	Margaret Buffie
Long Journey Home	Julius Lester
The Door in the Wall	Marguerite de Angeli

APPENDIX G: PARENTS SHARING BOOKS: SPRING 1992 BOOKSHELF

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer	Mark Twain
All Creatures Great and Small	James Herriot
Anne of Green Gables	L. M. Montgomery
Are You There God? It's Me Margaret	Judy Blume
The Baby Sitters Club #1: Kristy's Great Idea	Ann M. Martin
The Bell Jar	Sylvia Plath
Bingo Brown and the Language of Love	Betsy Byars
Bo Jackson: Playing the Games	Ellen Emerson White
Bridge to Terabithia	Katherine Paterson
Bunnicula: A Rabbit Tale of Mystery	Deborah & James Howe
The Chocolate War	Robert Cormier
Circle of Gold	Candy Dawson Boyd
The Contender	Robert Lipsyte
Cracker Jackson	Betsy Byars
A Day No Pigs Would Die	Robert Newton Peck
Deathwatch	Robb White
Deenie	Judy Blume
Dicey's Song	Cynthia Voigt
The Door in the Wall	Marguerite de Angeli
Dragonwings	Laurence Yep
The Haunting of Frances Rain	Margaret Buffie
The Hobbit	J.R.R. Tolkien
The Incredible Journey	Sheila Burnford
Johnny Tremain	Esther Forbes
The Land I Lost: Adventures of a Boy in Vietnam	Huynh Quang Nhoung
Long Journey Home	Julius Lester
Marshmallow Muscles, Banana Brainstorms	Karen T. Taha
Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH	Robert C. O'Brien
My Brother Sam Is Dead	James Lincoln Collier & Christopher Collier
The Outsiders	S. E. Hinton
Pardon Me, You're Stepping on My Eyeball	Paul Zindel
Park's Quest	Katherine Paterson
The Pigman	Paul Zindel
The Pistachio Prescription	Paula Danziger
Poetry USA	edited by Paul Molloy

Rebecca	Daphne DuMaurier
Ring of Endless Light	Madeleine L'Engle
Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry	Mildred D. Taylor
Sarah Bishop	Scott O'Dell
The Sign of the Beaver	Elizabeth George Speare
Snow Treasure	Marie McSwigan
Stand and Deliver	Nicholas Edwards
Treasure Island	Robert Louis Stevenson
Trouble River	Betsy Byars
Tuck Everlasting	Natalie Babbitt
Watership Down	Richard Adams
The Westing Game	Ellen Raskin
Where the Red Fern Grows	Wilson Rawls
Wrestling with Honor	David Klass
A Wrinkle in Time	Madeleine L'Engle
The True Story of the Three Pigs	Jon Scieszka

This book was included with the manual.

APPENDIX H: PARENT PRE-SURVEY

LOCAL WORKSHOP QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

(to be filled out at first parent meeting)

School_____ SS# _____

1. What are your reasons for attending the *Parents Sharing Books* training?

2. Do you ever read to one another at home? _____No _____Yes
3. Do you have a set time for reading at home? _____No _____Yes
   If so, when and how long?
4. Do you like to read? _____Yes _____No
5. Do you presently discuss any of these with your child? Circle how often.

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely	Never
News	D	W	M	R	N
School Work	D	W	M	R	N
Books	D	W	M	R	N
Magazines	D	W	M	R	N
Personal Concerns	D	W	M	R	N

6. How often does your family use a library? (circle one)

   Daily Weekly Monthly Rarely Never

7. How do you rate your dailiy communications with your child? (circle one).

   Excellent Good Average Fair Poor

APPENDIX I: PARENT POST-SURVEY

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

(to be filled out at last parent meeting)

School_____ SS#_____

1. Do you read to one another at home? ____ No ____ Yes
2. Do you have a set time for reading at home? ____ No ____ Yes
   If so, when and how long?
3. Do you presently discuss any of these with your child?
   Circle how often.

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely	Never
News	D	W	M	R	N
School Work	D	W	M	R	N
Books	D	W	M	R	N
Magazines	D	W	M	R	N
Personal Concerns	D	W	M	R	N

4. How often does your family use a library? (circle one)

   Daily Weekly Monthly Rarely Never

5. What were the favorite books you and your child read from the *Parents Sharing Books* collection? Why?

6. What were the least favorite books you and your child read from the *Parents Sharing Books* collection? Why?

7. What books have you read that you and your child would like to see added to the *Parents Sharing Books* collection?

8. Do you feel you and your child benefited from participating in the *Parents Sharing Books* Project? ____ Yes ____ No
   Please explain:

Comments:

APPENDIX J: STUDENT PRE-SURVEY

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

(to be filled out at first parent meeting; or parents can take home and bring to second meeting.)

School_____ SS# _____

1. Do you like to read? _____ Yes _____ No
2. What are your reasons for participating in *Parents Sharing Books?*
3. How do you rate your communications with your parents? (circle one).

   Excellent Good Average Fair Poor
4. Do you presently discuss any of these with your parents? Circle how often.

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely	Never
News	D	W	M	R	N
School Work	D	W	M	R	N
Books	D	W	M	R	N
Magazines	D	W	M	R	N
Personal Concerns	D	W	M	R	N

5. Why do you read? (circle as many as appropriate).

   For information

   To complete school assignments

   For pleasure

APPENDIX K: STUDENT POST-SURVEY

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

(To be filled out after parent training is completed)

School_____ SS#_____

1. Do you like to read? _____ Yes _____ No
2. How do you rate your communications with your parents? (circle one).

   Excellent Good Average Fair Poor

3. Do you presently discuss any of these with your parents? Circle how often.

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely	Never
News	D	W	M	R	N
School Work	D	W	M	R	N
Books	D	W	M	R	N
Magazines	D	W	M	R	N
Personal Concerns	D	W	M	R	N

4. Do you think the PSB program has done any of the following? (check all that apply)

   _____ Improved communication with my parents

   _____ Increased my desire to read alone

   _____ Increased my desire to read and talk with my parents

   _____ Increased my appreciation of reading

   _____ Not affected me at all

5. What were the favorite books you and your parent(s) read from the *Parents Sharing Books* collection? Why?
6. What were the least favorite books you and your parent(s) read from the *Parents Sharing Books* collection? Why?
7. What books have you read that you and your parent(s) would like to see added to the *Parents Sharing Books* collection?
8. Do you feel you and your parent(s) benefited from participating in the *Parents Sharing Books* Project? _____ Yes _____ No
   Please explain:

Comments:

APPENDIX L: PARENT AND STUDENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PSB BOOKSHELF

The Clan of the Cave Bear	Jean Auel
Across Five Aprils	Irene Hunt
Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry	Mildred Taylor
Let the Circle Be Unbroken	Mildred Taylor
Dicey's Song	Cynthia Voight
Solitary Blue	Cynthia Voight
Are You in the House Alone?	Richard Peck
Bridge to Terabithia	Katherine Paterson
Jacob Have I Loved	Katherine Paterson
The Great Gilly Hopkins	Katherine Paterson
The Chocolate War	Robert Cormier
I Am the Cheese	Robert Cornier
Cracker Jackson	Betsy Byars
Dinky Hocker Smokes Smack	M. E. Kerr
A Hero Ain't Nothin' but a Sandwich	Alice Childress
Half Nelson, Full Nelson	Bruce Stone
Motown and Didi: A Love Story	Walter Dean Myers
Hoops	Walter Dean Myers
The Man Without a Face	Isabelle Holland
Ordinary People	Judith Guest
The Outsiders	S. E. Hinton
Dead Birds Singing	Marc Talbert
I Was a Fifteen-Year-Old Blimp	Patti Stern
The Day They Came to Arrest the Book	Nat Hentoff
The Wave	Morton Rhue
The Atami Dragons	David Klass
Brogg's Brain	Kin Platt
The Grey King	Susan Cooper
The Wizard of Earthsea	Ursula LeGuin
The Mysterious Schoolmaster	Karin Anckarvsvard
The Westing Game	Ellen Raskin
Tiger Eyes	Judy Blume
Cheaper by the Dozen	Frank & Ernestine Gilbreth
Follow the River	James Alexander Thom
The Search for Delicious	Natalie Babbitt
To Kill a Mockingbird	Harper Lee
Teacup Full of Roses	Sharon Bell Mathis

APPENDIX M: IU INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

INVESTIGATORS

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Phone _____

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Phone _____

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Phone _____

INFORMATION

You are invited to participate in an evaluation of the *Parents Sharing Books Project*. This study will take place _____. This form outlines the purposes of this study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a respondent.

The purposes of this project are:

1. to gain insight into the habits, attitudes, and behaviors related to book sharing of parents and middle school children who have participated in the *Parents Sharing Books* training.
2. to gain insight into the experiences of parents and middle school children who have been involved in successful *Parents Sharing Books* programs.
3. to gain insight from leader teams who have implemented successful *Parents Sharing Books* programs.

The methods to be used to collect data for this study are explained below. From these data sources, we will write a case study report about you.

Initial contact will be made to acquaint researchers and subjects to the purpose of the interviews. Interviews, along with the use of audio tapes, and perhaps video tapes, and photographs that may be used for PSB publications, will be conducted with the parents, students, and/or leader teams. Interviews will take approximately 40-60 minutes for each respondent and these interviews will take place in the school library or other convenient places within the school. A case report will be written and shared with you. Data collected from

your case study will be compiled into a report that will be submitted to Lilly Endowment, Inc. and used in other publications. You may request that your real name and identity not be revealed in these reports.

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time about the nature of the study and our methods. Your suggestions and concerns are important to us. Our phone numbers and addresses are provided at the top of the consent form.

The following are the terms of participatin gin the case study:

1. Your real name will be used during data collection and in the written case report only if you wish. If you wish that your real name not be used during the data collection or in the written case report, at the start of the study, you, and any place names will be given pseudonyms that will be used in all reports.
2. If you give permission to be recorded, audio tapes, video tapes, and photographs will be used in publications and instructional materials for the *Parents Sharing Books* Project. You will have access to and be allowed to preview the recordings.
3. You will receive a copy of the case report before the final draft is written and negotiate changes with the researcher.
4. You will receive a copy of the final case report soon after completion. This final case report will be used in future publications of the Family Literacy Center to disseminate information about the *Parents Sharing Books* Project.
5. Your participation in this study will help to highlight the organization, results, and benefits of this parent involvement program to the funding agency, Lilly Endowment, Inc.
6. The information collected through this interview is the property of the Family Literacy Center. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of your taped interview, a tape can be made available to you. You should contact the Family Literacy Center if you are interested.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The information in the study records will be kept confidential. Data will be stored at the Family Literacy Center, Indiana University, and will be made available only to persons conducting the study unless you specifically give permission in writing to do otherwise.

COMPENSATION

For participating in this study, you will receive trade books for your enjoyment at home or you may wish to contribute these books to your school's PSB Bookshelf. If you withdraw from the study prior to its completion, this benefit will no longer be available to you.

CONTACT

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher(s) listed at the top of this consent form.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time from the study, for any reason and without any prejudice. If you withdraw from the study prior to its completion, your data will be returned to you upon request or destroyed.

CONSENT

I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

I (do/do not) grant permission to be quoted directly in the case report.

I (do/do not) grant permission to have the interviews audio-taped. The respondent has the right to preview these materials upon request.

I (do/do not) grant permission to have artifacts such as book sharing journals, sketches, and other PSB related materials copied and used in a case study report.

I (do/do not) grant permission to have my real name used in case study records and case study reports.

PARENTAL CONSENT FOR CHILD PARTICIPATION

I (do/do not) grant permission for my child to be interviewed and quoted directly in e case report.

I (do/do not) grant permission to have my child's interviews audio taped. The child respondent has the right to preview these materials upon request.

I (do/do not) grant permission to have my child's real name used in case study records and case study reports.

_____ _____

Leader's signature Date

_____ _____

Parent's signature Date

_____ _____

Student's signature Date

_____ _____

Investigator's signature Date

_____ _____

Investigator's signature Date

APPENDIX N: *PARENTS SHARING BOOKS* PROJECT SCHOOL SITES

Anderson Community School Corporation
- North Side Middle School

Attica Consolidated School Corp.
- Attica High School

Crawford County Community School Corp.
- Crawford County Jr.-Sr. High School

East Allen County Schools
- Leo Junior-Senior High School

School City of East Chicago
- West Side Junior High School

Edinburgh Community School Corporation
- Edinburgh Community High School

Elkhart Community Schools
- North Side Middle School
- Pierre Moran Middle School

Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corp.
- Evans Middle School
- Glenwood Middle School
- Helfrich Park Middle School
- McGary Middle School
- Oak Hill Middle School
- Thompkins Middle School
- Washington Middle School

Ft. Wayne Community Schools
- Jefferson Middle School
- Lane Middle School
- Miami Middle School

Gary Community School Corporation
- Alfred Beckman Middle School
- Bailly Middle School
- Dunbar-Pulaski Middle School
- Emerson Middle School
- Kennedy-King Middle School
- Tolleston Middle School
- Thomas A. Edison School

Hammond City Schools
- A.L. Spohn Elem./Middle School
- Charles N. Scott Middle School

Indianapolis Public Schools
- Crispus Attucks Junior High School
- Emma Donnan School
- Henry W. Longfellow School
- H.L. Harshman School
- Thomas A. Edison School
- Willard J. Gambold School

Knox Community School Corporation
- Knox Community Junior High School

Lake Ridge Schools
- Lake Ridge Middle School

LaPorte Community School Corporation
- Kesling Middle School

Madison Consolidated Schools
- Madison Junior High School

Marion Community Schools
- John L. McCulloch Middle School
- Jones Middle School
- Justice Middle School

Michigan City Area Schools
- Barker Junior High School

Monroe County Community School Corp.
- Lora L. Batchelor Middle School
- Tri-North Middle School

Muncie Community Schools
- Northside Middle School
- Wilson Middle School

New Albany-Floyd County Cons. Schools
- Nathaniel Scribner Junior High School

New Castle Community School Corp.
- Parkview Junior High School
- Parkview Junior High B-7 Building

Northeast School Corporation
- Hymera Elementary School
- Union High School

M.S.D. Perry Township
- Keystone Middle School
- Meridian Middle School

Portage Township Schools
- Willowcreek Middle School

Richmond Community School Corporation
Hibberd School

Rockville Community Schools
Rockville Junior-Senior High School

Shoals Community School Corporation
Shoals Community Jr.-Sr. High School

South Bend Community School Corporation
Pierre Navarre Middle School

South Vermillion Community School Corp.
South Vermillion Middle School

Spencer-Owen Community Schools
Owen Valley Middle School

Union School Corporation
Union Junior & High School

Vigo County School Corporation
Chauncey Rose Junior High School
Otter Creek Junior High School
Sarah Scott Junior High School

M.S.D. Warren Township
Creston Junior High School
Stonybrook Junior High School

Washington Community Schools Inc.
Washington Junior High School

M.S.D. Wayne Township
Fulton Junior High School
South Wayne Junior High School

For more information about Parent Involvement and Family Literacy call or write:

Family Literacy Center
Indiana University
2805 E. 10th St., Suite 150
Bloomington, IN 47408-2698
(812) 855-5847 or (800) 759-4723
FAX (812) 855-7901